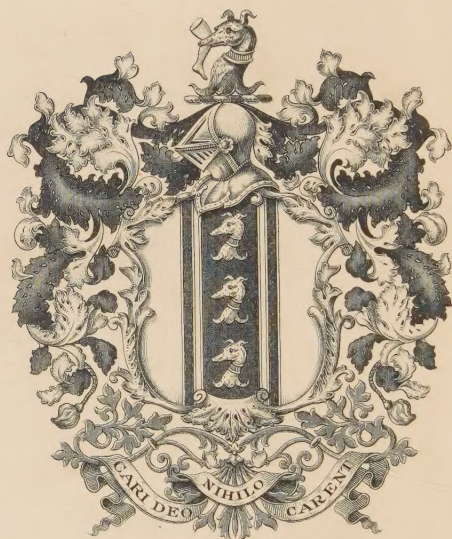




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John Wingate Weeks

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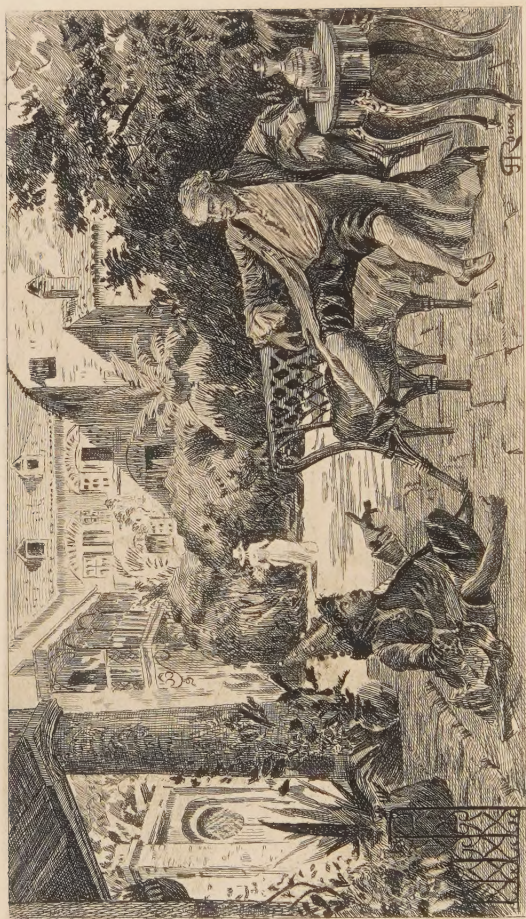
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BUG-JARGAL

1791



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VICTOR HUGO

BUG-JARGAL

TRANSLATED BY

EUGENIA DE B.



PHILADELPHIA

GEORGE BARRIE & SON

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BUG-JARGAL

1791

In 1818, the author of this book was sixteen ; he wagered that he would write a volume in a fortnight. He made *Bug-Jargal*. Sixteen, that is the age when one gambles on all things and improvises on everything. This book, therefore, was written two years before *Han of Iceland*. And although, seven years later, in 1825, the author had re-touched and re-written a large part, it is none the less, in the main and in many of the details, the first work of the author.

He asks the pardon of his readers, for troubling them with details of so little importance ; but he believes that the small number of persons who like to class by rank of size and by order of birth, the works of a poet, no matter how obscure, will bear no ill will against him for giving them the age of *Bug-Jargal* ; and, as for him, like the travelers who turn in the middle of their road and search to discover in the misty folds of the horizon the place whence they set out, he has wished to give here a memorandum of this

epoch of serenity, audacity and confidence, in which he boldly undertook a subject so immense, the revolt of the negroes of Santo Domingo in 1791, a struggle of giants, a matter in which three worlds were interested, Europe and Africa for combatants, America for the field of battle.

MARCH 24, 1832.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The episode of which you are going to read, whose foundation is borrowed from the revolt of the slaves in Santo Domingo in 1791, has an air of importance which should have sufficed to have prevented the author from publishing it. However, a rough draft of this opusculc having already been printed and a limited number of copies distributed, in 1820, at an epoch when the politics of that day were very little concerned about Hayti, it is evident that, if the subject which he has treated has since taken a new degree of interest, it is not the fault of the author. This is a case in which events have arranged themselves to suit the book, and not the book to suit the events. Be that as it may, the author did not dream of drawing his work from the sort of obscurity in which it was almost buried ; but, warned that a bookseller of the capital proposed to re-print his anonymous sketch, he believed it

his duty to anticipate this re-print by bringing to the light himself his work revised, and, to a certain extent, done over again ; a precaution which preserved his self-esteem as an author from an annoyance, and the bookseller afore-said from a bad speculation.

Many of the distinguished persons who, either as colonists or as officials, were entangled in the trouble of Santo Domingo having learned of the approaching publication of this episode, have been pleased to communicate spontaneously to the author materials all the more precious in so much that they are almost entirely unpublished. The author wishes to express to them here his lively gratitude. These documents have been peculiarly useful to him in correcting what the story of Captain d'Auverney lacked with respect to local color, and where uncertain relative to historic truth.

Finally, he ought to warn his readers that the story of *Bug-Jargal* is only a fragment of a more extended work which should be composed with the title *Tales Under a Tent*. The author assumes that, during the wars of the revolution, several French officers agreed among themselves to pass their nights in bivouac by each in his turn reciting some one of his adventures. The episode which is herewith published forms a part of this series of

tales ; it may be detached without disadvantage, and, moreover, the work of which it ought to form a part is not finished, never will be, and is not worth the trouble of finishing.

JANUARY, 1826.





I.

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When it came to the turn of Captain Leopold d'Auverney, he opened his eyes in surprise, and assured his comrades that he did not remember a single event of his life that was worthy of their attention.

"But, Captain d'Auverney," said Lieutenant Henri, "you have, however, they say, traveled and seen the world; have you not visited the Antilles, Africa, Italy and Spain. . . . Ah! captain, here is your lame dog!"

D'Auverney started, let fall his cigar and turned quickly to the tent door, at the same instant an enormous dog appeared, limping towards him.

The dog crushed the captain's cigar in passing; the captain paid no attention to it.

The dog licked his feet, wagged his tail, whined and gamboled as well as he was able; then went to sleep before him. The captain, moved and oppressed, mechanically caressed

him with the left hand, undoing with the other the chin-strap of his helmet, repeating from time to time, "Here you are, Rask! here you are!" Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, at last he exclaimed, "But who has brought you back?"

"With your permission, captain . . ."

For the last few minutes, Sergeant Thaddeus had raised the curtain of the tent, and stood, his right arm hidden in his coat, tears in his eyes, contemplating in silence the conclusion of the Odyssey. At last he risked these words: "With your permission, captain . . ." D'Auverney raised his eyes.

"It is you, Thaddeus; and how the devil have you been able—eh? Poor dog! I thought him in the English camp. Where did you find him then?"

"Thank God! captain, you see me as happy as your little nephew when you declined for him *cornu*, the horn: *cornu*, of the horn . . ."

"But tell me, then, where did you find him?"

"I did not find him, captain; I went to look for him."

The captain rose, and offered his hand to the sergeant, but the sergeant's hand remained in his coat. The captain took no notice.

"It was this way ; you see, captain, since poor Rask was lost, I noticed, with your permission, if you please, that you were beside yourself. For all you say, I believe that when he did not come to me in the evening, as usual, to share my ration of bread it would have taken very little to make Thaddeus weep like a child. But no, thank God, I have only wept twice in my life : the first was the day where . . ." and the sergeant cast an uneasy look upon his captain. "The second, when that scamp Balthazar, the corporal of the 7th half brigade, persuaded me to peel a bunch of onions."

"It seems to me, Thaddeus," cried Henri, with a laugh, "that you avoid telling us what was the first occasion upon which you shed tears."

"It was doubtless, old comrade, when you received the roll-call of La Tour d'Auvergne, the first grenadier of France," said the captain kindly, as he patted Rask's head.

"No, no, captain ; if Sergeant Thaddeus wept, it was when he gave the order to fire on Bug-Jargal, otherwise called Pierrot."

A cloud gathered on the countenance of d'Auverney. He quickly approached the sergeant and endeavored to clasp his hand ; but in spite of the honor the old man still kept his hand hidden under his coat.

“Yes, captain,” continued Thaddeus, drawing back a step or two, whilst d’Auverney fixed his eyes upon him with a strange and sorrowful expression. “Yes, I wept that day, and he well deserved it. He was black, it is true, but gunpowder is black also, and—and . . .”

The good sergeant would have wished to follow out his strange comparison. There was something in the idea that pleased him; but he failed to express it, and after having attacked his idea on every side, so to speak, as a general and failed, against a strong place, he raised the siege, and without noticing the smiles of his young officers who listened to him.

“Tell me, captain, do you recollect how that poor negro arrived all out of breath, at the moment when his ten comrades were there? Truly, it was necessary to tie them. It was I who commanded and then he untied them, and took their place, although they did all that they could to dissuade him; but he was inflexible. Ah! what a man! It was a true Gibraltar! And then, captain, he drew himself up as if he were going to enter a ball-room, and the same Rask, his dog, who knew what they were going to do, is here, and who flew at my throat . . .”

“Generally, Thaddeus,” interrupted the captain, “you do not let pass this point of

your story, caressing Rask ; see how he looks at you."

"You are right, sir," replied Thaddeus, with embarrassment ; "he looks at me, poor Rask—but the old woman Malajuda told me it was unlucky to pat a dog with the left hand."

"And why not with your right?" asked d'Auverney with surprise, and for the first time noticing the hand reposing in his coat and the pallor spreading on Thad's face.

The sergeant's discomfort appeared to increase.

"With your permission, captain, it is—You have already a lame dog, I fear that you will finish by having also a one-hand sergeant."

The captain continued his siege.

"How? What? What say you, Thaddeus? one-handed! Let me see your arm. One-handed! Great heavens!"

D'Auverney trembled ; the sergeant slowly loosened his cloak and showed to his chief his arm enveloped in a blood-stained handkerchief.

"Ah! my God!" exclaimed the captain, carefully undoing the bandage. "But tell me, old comrade, how this happened."

"Oh! the thing is simple enough. I told you how I had noticed your grief since those

confounded English had taken away your dog, poor Rask, Bug's dog. It was enough . . . I made up my mind to-day to bring him back, even if it cost me my life, so that you might eat a good supper. It was, however, after having told Mathelet, your servant, to brush your full-dress uniform, as we are to go into action to-morrow, I crept quietly out of camp, armed only with my sabre, and crouched under the hedges until I neared the English camp. I had not passed the first trench, when with your permission, captain, in the under-brush on the left, I saw a whole crowd of red soldiers. I crept on quietly to see what they were doing, and as they did not see me in the midst of them I perceived Rask tied to a tree, whilst two of the milords, naked like the heathen, were knocking each other about with their fists, until their bones sounded like the big drum of the regiment. It was these two Englishmen, if you please, who were fighting for your dog. But when Rask caught sight of me, he gave such a bound that the rope broke, and in the twinkling of an eye the rogue was after me. You may believe that the English did not stay behind. I plunged into the woods. Rask followed me. Several balls whistled past my ears. Rask barked, but happily they could not hear him for their shouts of 'French dog! French dog!'

as if Rask was not of the pure Santo Domingo breed. In spite of all I crushed through the thicket, and had almost got clean away, when two red coats confronted me. My sabre accounted for one, and would have rid me of the other, had his pistol not unluckily had a bullet in it. You see my right arm. No matter! 'French dog' leaped at his throat, as if he were an old acquaintance. The Englishman fell, strangled, for the embrace was so tight. Finally, Thad had returned to the camp, and Rask also. My only regret is that the good God will not permit me to go to the battle to-morrow. There!"

The features of the old sergeant were overcast at the idea of not receiving his wound in a battle.

"Thaddeus!" exclaimed the captain in an irritated tone. Then he added gently: "Were you mad enough to expose your life thus for a dog?"

"It was not for a dog, captain, it was for Rask."

D'Auverney's face softened immediately. The sergeant continued: "For Rask, for Bug's dog."

"Enough, enough, old Thad!" cried the captain, putting his hand across his eyes. "Come," added he after a short silence,

"lean on me, and let us go to the ambulance."

Thaddeus obeyed after some resistance. The dog, who, during this scene, had half eaten the bear skin of his master, got up and followed them.

II.

This episode had quickly excited the attention and the curiosity of the joyous spectators.

Captain Leopold d'Auverney was one of those men who, in whatever position the chances of nature and society may place them, always inspire a certain respect mingled with interest. At the first glimpse there was nothing striking in him—his manner was cold, and his look indifferent. The tropical sun, browning his face, had not imparted to him that vivacity of speech and gesture which amongst the Creoles is united to a carelessness often full of grace. D'Auverney spoke little, listened rarely, but showed himself ready to act. Always the first in the saddle, and the last under the tent, he seemed to seek a refuge from his thoughts in bodily fatigue. These thoughts, which had marked his brow with many a premature wrinkle, were not those that you can get rid of by confiding them, nor could they be discussed in idle conversation. Leopold d'Auverney, whose body the hardships of war could not subdue,

seemed to experience a sense of insurmountable fatigue in what is termed the conflict of the feelings. He avoided argument as much as he sought warfare. If at any time he allowed himself to be drawn into a discussion, he would utter a few words full of common sense and reason, and then at the moment of triumph over his antagonist he would stop short, and muttering "What good is it?" would saunter off to the commanding officer to glean what information he could regarding the hour of the charge or of the assault.

His comrades forgave his cold, reserved, and silent habits, because upon every occasion they had found him kind, gentle and benevolent. He had saved many a life at the risk of his own, and they well knew that though his mouth was rarely opened, yet his purse was never closed. They liked him in the army, pardoned him, and in a certain way respected him.

However he was young, many would have guessed him at thirty years of age, but he was some years under it. Although he had for a long period fought in the ranks of the Republican army, they were in ignorance of his former life. The only one to whom, with Rask, he seemed ever to open his heart was Sergeant Thaddeus, who had joined the regiment with him, and would at times speak vaguely of sad events in his early life. They knew

that d'Auverney had undergone great misfortunes in America; that he had been married in Santo Domingo, and that his wife and all his family had perished in those terrible massacres which had marked the revolution in that magnificent colony. At the time of which we write, misfortunes of this kind were so general, that any one could sympathize with, and feel pity for, such sufferers.

They pitied Captain d'Auverney less for his misfortunes than for the manner of his sufferings. That is to say, beneath his icy mask of indifference one could see the traces of the incurably wounded spirit.

From the moment the battle commenced, his face became serene, and in the fight he behaved as if he sought for the rank of general; and as modest after the victory as if he was only a private soldier. His comrades, seeing him thus despise honor and promotion, could not understand what it was that lighted up his countenance with a ray of hope when the action commenced, and they did not for a moment divine that the prize d'Auverney was striving to gain was simply—*Death*.

The Representatives of the People, in one of their missions of the army, had appointed him one day a Chief of Brigade on the field of battle; but he had declined the honor upon learning that it would remove him from

his old comrade Sergeant Thaddeus. Some days afterwards he offered to conduct a dangerous expedition, and returned, against general expectation and his own hope. They heard him regret the rank that he had refused. "For," said he, "since the enemy's guns always spare me, perhaps the guillotine, which ever strikes down those it has raised, would in time have wished for me."

III.

Such was the man upon whom the conversation turned as soon as he had left the tent.

"I would wager," cried Lieutenant Henri, wiping some mud from his boot, left there by the dog as he passed, "I would wager that the captain would not exchange the broken paw of his dog for the ten baskets of Madeira that we caught a glimpse of in the general's wagon."

"Tut ! tut !" cried Aide-de-camp Paschal, gaily, "that would be a bad bargain : the baskets are empty by now, I know something about it, and," added he more seriously, "thirty empty bottles are not of much value, you grant that, lieutenant—the dog's paw would, after all, make a good bell-handle."

They all laughed at the grave manner in which the *aide-de-camp* pronounced these words. A young officer of the Basque Hus-sars, Alfred, who did not laugh, looked discontented.

"I do not see, gentlemen, any subject for chaff in this matter. This dog and sergeant

who I have always seen near d'Auverney ever since I have known him, seem to me to give rise to some interest. At last this scene . . ."

Paschal, annoyed and displeased with Alfred and the good humor of the others, interrupted him.

"This scene is very sentimental. How then!—a lost dog found, and a broken arm! . . ."

"Captain Paschal, you are wrong," said Henri, throwing an empty bottle outside the tent, "this Bug, otherwise called Pierrot, excites my curiosity greatly."

Paschal, already offended, drowned his anger by remarking that his glass, which he thought empty, was full. D'Auverney returned, and sat down without uttering a word. His manner was still sad, but his face was more calm. He appeared so pre-occupied that he heard nothing about him. Rask, who had followed him, lay down at his feet, but regarded him with a disturbed look.

"Your glass, Captain d'Auverney. Taste this."

"Ah! thank God!" replied the captain, evidently imagining that he was answering Paschal's question, "the wound is not dangerous—the arm is not broken."

The respect which all felt for d'Auverney prevented a burst of laughter.

"Since your mind is at rest regarding Thaddeus' wound," said Henri, "and, as you may remember, we entered into an agreement to pass away the hours of bivouac by relating to each other our adventures, I hope, my dear friend, that you will carry out your promise by telling us the history of your lame dog, and of Bug—I do not know why—otherwise called Pierrot, that regular Gibraltar of a man."

To this request, said in a half-serious, half-jocular tone, d'Auverney did not reply, until all joined in with the lieutenant.

D'Auverney at last yielded.

"I will do what you ask, gentlemen, but you must only expect a very simple tale, in which I play an extremely second-rate part. If the affection that exists between Thaddeus, Rask, and myself leads you to expect anything very wonderful, I fear that you will be greatly disappointed. However, I will begin."

Then there was silence. Paschal emptied his gourd of brandy, and Henri enveloped himself in the half-eaten bear skin to guard against the night wind, whilst Alfred was humming the Galatain air of *mata-perros*.

For a moment d'Auverney relapsed into thought, as though he wished to recall past events which had long since been replaced in his memory by others; but at last, in a low voice and with frequent pauses, he began his tale.

IV

Although born in France, I was sent at an early age to Santo Domingo, to the care of an uncle, a very rich colonist, whose daughter I was to marry.

My uncle's plantations were in the Plains of Acul, near Fort Galifet.

The position of the estate, which no doubt you wonder at my describing so minutely, was one of the causes of all our disasters, and the eventual total ruin of our whole family.

Eight hundred negro slaves cultivated the enormous domains of my uncle. I assure you that the sad condition of these slaves was aggravated by the hardness of their master. My uncle was one of the happily small number of planters from whom despotic power had taken away the gentler feelings of humanity. He was accustomed to see his most trifling command unhesitatingly obeyed, and the slightest delay on the part of his slaves in carrying it out was punished with the harshest severity; whilst the intercession of the children did not allay his anger. We were too often obliged to rest satisfied by secretly

assuaging the injuries which we were powerless to prevent.

"How! fine phrases these!" said Henri, in a whisper, leaning towards his neighbor. "Come, I hope that the captain will not pass over the misfortunes of the half-blacks without some criticisms on the duties of humanity, *et cætera*. He should at least be equal to the Massiac Club."¹

"I thank you, Henri, for saving me from making that mistake," said d'Auverney, coldly, for he had overheard him.

Then he continued :

Amongst the multitude of his slaves, one only had found favor in my uncle's sight ; this was a half-caste Spanish dwarf, a *Griffe de couleur*,² who had been given him by Lord Effingham, the Governor of Jamaica. My uncle, who had for many years resided in Brazil, and had adopted the luxurious habits of the Portuguese, loved to surround himself with an establishment that was in keeping with his wealth. A number of slaves dressed in the uniform of European servants gave the house a princely appearance. In order that nothing should be wanting, he had made the slave presented to him by Lord Effingham his fool, in imitation of the feudal lords who had jesters attached to their households. I must say that the choice was singularly happy.

Habibrah, for that was the half-caste's name, was one of those strangely-formed, or, rather, deformed beings, who would be looked upon as monsters if their very hideousness did not cause a laugh. This ill-featured dwarf was short and fat, but moved with wondrous activity upon a pair of slender limbs, which, when he sat down, bent under him like the legs of a spider. His enormous head, covered with a mass of red curly wool, was stuck between his shoulders, whilst his ears were so large that Habibrah's comrades were in the habit of saying that he used them to wipe his eyes when he wept. On his face there was always a grin, which was continually changing its character, and which caused his ugliness to be of an ever-varying description. My uncle was fond of him, because of his extreme hideousness and his inextinguishable gayety. Habibrah was his favorite. Whilst the other slaves were overwhelmed with work Habibrah's sole duty was to carry behind his master a large fan, made of the feathers of the bird of paradise, to keep away the sand-flies and the mosquitoes. My uncle made him eat at his feet on a reed mat, and fed him with tit-bits from his own plate. Habibrah appeared to appreciate all these acts of kindness; he was accustomed to these privileges, and at the slightest sign from my uncle he

would run to him with the agility of a monkey and the docility of a dog.

I did not like this slave. There was something crawling in his servility; and though outdoor slavery does not dishonor, domestic service too often debases. I felt a sentiment of pity for those slaves who toiled in the scorching sun, with scarcely a vestige of clothing to hide their chains; but this deformed clown, this lazy slave, filled me with contempt, with his garments ornamented with gold lace and adorned with bells. Besides, the dwarf never made use of his influence with his master to ameliorate the condition of his fellow-sufferers. He never asked a pardon from his master, who inflicted these chastisements so often; and I heard him once, when he thought that he and his master were alone, urge him to increase his severity towards his ill-fated comrades. The other slaves, however, who ought to have looked upon him with anger and jealousy, did not seem to hate him. He inspired in them a sort of respect which resembled enmity; and when, dressed in all the splendor of laced garments, and a tall pointed cap ornamented with bells and quaint symbols traced upon it in red ink, he walked past their huts, I have heard them murmur in accents of awe, "He is an *obi*."³

These details, to which I now draw your attention, occupied my mind but little then. I had given myself up entirely to the emotion of a pure love in which nothing else could mingle; a love which was returned me with passion by the girl to whom I was betrothed, and I gave little heed to anyone except Marie. Accustomed from youth to look upon her as my future wife, she who was already like a sister, there was formed between us a tenderness of which no one understood, as I say that our love was a mixture of fraternal devotion, passionate exaltation and conjugal confidence. Few men have spent their earlier years more happily than I have done, few men have felt their souls expand into life in the midst of a delicious climate, with perfect happiness in the present and the brightest hopes for the future. Surrounded from birth with all the contentments of riches, of all the privileges of rank in a country where color is sufficient to live it, passing my days near the being who had all my love, seeing this love favored by my parents, and all that in the age where the blood boiled, in a country where the summer is eternal, where nature is lovely; what more could give me a blind faith in my happy fate? Could I have more to give me the right to say that few men could have spent their earlier years more happily?

The captain paused for a moment, as if these thoughts of bygone happiness had stifled his voice, and then added sadly :

It is true, I have now the right to add that no one could have passed his later ones in more profound misery and affliction.

And as if he had taken new force from his unhappiness, he continued in an assured voice :

V.

In the midst of these blind illusions and hopes, my twentieth birthday approached. It came in the month of August, 1791, and my uncle had decided that this should be the date of my marriage with Marie. You can well understand that the thoughts of happiness, now so near, absorbed all my faculties, and how little notice I took of the political debates with which this colony had been agitated for the past two years. I will not, therefore, speak of the Count de Peinier, or of M. de Blanchelande, the Colonel de Maudit who had such a tragical death. I will not attempt to describe the jealousies of the Provincial House of Assembly of the North, and the Colonial Assembly, which afterwards called itself the General Assembly, declaring that the word "Colonial" had a ring of slavery in it. These miseries which overturned all minds, offered no more interest than the disasters which they produced. For my own part, in this jealousy which divided the Cap and Port au Prince, if I had an opinion this ought to be necessarily in favor of the Cap, as

we were inhabitants of the territory and of the Assembly, of which my uncle was a member.

Only once did I mix myself up in the question of the day. It was on the occasion of the disastrous decree of the 15th of May, 1791, by which the National Assembly of France admitted free men of color to enjoy the same political privileges as the whites. At a ball given at Cap by the Government, many of the younger colonists spoke in impassioned terms of this law, which wounded, so cruelly, the self-respect of the whites, perhaps well founded. I had, as yet, taken no part in the conversation, when I saw approaching the group a wealthy planter whom the whites received merely upon sufferance, and whose color made one suspect his origin. I stepped in front of him, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "Pass on, sir, or you may hear words which would certainly be disagreeable to those with *mixed blood* in their veins."

This insinuation so enraged him that he challenged me. We were both wounded. I confess that I was wrong to have thus provoked him; and it is probable that what one calls *the prejudice of color* was not sufficient to excite me; this man had for some time the audacity to pay certain attentions

to my cousin, and had danced with her the very night upon which I had insulted him.

However, I saw, with enthusiasm, the moment approach when I should possess Marie, and I was a perfect stranger to the state of political ferment in which those around me lived. With eyes fixed on my happiness I did not perceive the frightful storm which already almost covered our political horizon, and which ought, in breaking, root out its existence. The mind, itself the first to be alarmed, did not think of a revolt among the slaves—a class too much despised to be feared ; but there existed, alone, between the whites and the free mulattoes sufficient hatred to cause this volcano, so long suppressed, to break out throughout the colony, which might entail the most disastrous consequences.

During the first days of August a strange incident occurred, which threw a slight shade of uneasiness over the sunshine of my happiness.

VI.

My uncle had on the banks of a little river, which flowed through his estates, a small rustic pavilion in the midst of a clump of trees where Marie went every day to enjoy the sea breeze, which blows regularly in Santo Domingo, even during the hottest months of the year, from sunrise until evening, and whose freshness increases or diminishes with the heat of the day.

I had taken care each morning to adorn this charming retreat with the sweetest flowers that I could gather.

One morning Marie came running to me in a great state of alarm. She had entered, as usual, her leafy retreat, and there she had perceived, with surprise and terror, all the flowers which I had arranged in the morning thrown upon the ground and trampled underfoot; a bunch of wild marigolds, freshly gathered, was placed upon her accustomed seat. She had hardly recovered from her terror when, in the adjoining coppice, she heard the sound of a guitar; then a voice, which was not mine, commenced to sing a song which seemed to





her Spanish, and in which her uneasiness of mind, and without doubt some virgin modesty, had prevented her understanding anything but her name frequently repeated. Then she had taken to flight, and happily he had not prevented her.

This recital filled me with jealousy and indignation. My first suspicions pointed to the mulatto with whom I had fought; but, even in the midst of my perplexity, I resolved to do nothing rashly. I soothed poor Marie and promised to watch over her without ceasing until the time should come when I would be permitted to offer a nearer protection.

Believing that the intruder whose insolence had so alarmed Marie would not content himself with what he had already done, I concealed myself that very evening near the portion of the house in which my betrothed's chamber was after everybody was asleep on the plantation. Hidden amongst the tall stalks of the sugar-cane, and armed with a dagger, I waited. I did not wait in vain. Towards the middle of the night, a melancholy prelude, rising in the silence some steps from me, suddenly awakened my attention. This noise was for me as a challenge; it was a guitar; it was under the very window of Marie's room. Furious with rage, with my dagger clutched firmly in my hand, I rushed

in the direction of the sound, crushing beneath my feet the brittle stalks of the sugar-canes. All of a sudden I felt myself seized and thrown upon my back with what appeared to be super-human force; my dagger was wrenched from my grasp, and I saw its point shining above my head. At the same moment I could perceive a pair of eyes and a double row of white teeth gleaming through the darkness, whilst a voice, in accents of concentrated rage, muttered, "*Te tengo, te tengo*" (I have you, I have you).

More astonished than frightened, I struggled vainly with my formidable antagonist, and already the point of the dagger had pierced my clothes, when Marie, whom the sound of the guitar and the noise of the struggle had aroused, appeared suddenly at her window. She recognized my voice, saw the gleam of the knife, and uttered a cry of terror and affright. This cry seemed to paralyze the hand of my opponent; he stopped as if petrified by an enchantment; but still, as though undecided, he kept the point of the dagger pressed upon my chest, then suddenly threw it away. "No!" said he, this time in French, "No! she would weep too much!" In ending these odd words, he disappeared in the canes; and before I could rise, bruised and shaken from the struggle, no sound and no sign remained of his presence or of his flight.

It would be difficult for me to tell that which passed within me from the time I revived from my first stupor in the arms of my sweet Marie, to whom I was so strangely preserved by the one who pretended to claim her. I was more furious than ever with my unknown rival, and was overcome with a feeling of shame at being indebted to him for my life. After all, however, I thought, "it is to Marie that I owe it; for it was the sound of *her* voice that caused him to drop his dagger." However, I could not hide from myself that there was something noble in the sentiment which had caused my unknown rival to spare me. But this rival, what was he then? One supposition after another rose in my mind, all to be discarded in turn. This could not be the mulatto planter to whom my suspicions had first been directed. He was far from having such extraordinary muscular power, and besides, it was not his voice. The man with whom I had a struggle was naked to the waist. Slaves alone went about half-clothed in this manner. But this could not be a slave. The feeling which had caused him to throw away the dagger would not have been found in the bosom of a slave; and besides, my whole soul revolted at the idea of having a slave for a rival. What was to be done? I determined to wait and watch.

VII.

Marie had awakened her old nurse, whom she looked upon almost in the light of her mother, who had died in giving her birth. I remained the rest of the night near her and in the morning we informed my uncle of the mysterious occurrence. His surprise was extreme; but, like me, his pride would not permit him to believe that the unknown lover of his daughter could be a slave. The nurse received the strictest orders from my uncle never to leave Marie alone for a moment; and as the sittings of the Provincial Assembly, the threatening aspect of the affairs of the colony, and the superintendence of the plantation allowed him but little leisure, he authorized me to accompany his daughter whenever she left the house, until the celebration of our nuptials, which was set for the twenty-second of August, and at the same time, presuming that the daring lover must be lurking in the neighborhood, he ordered the boundaries of the plantation to be more strictly guarded than ever, night and day.

These precautions taken, with the consent of my uncle, I determined to put the matter to further proof. I went to the summer-house by the river, and repairing the destruction of the evening before, I placed a quantity of fresh flowers in their accustomed place for Marie.

When the time came that she was accustomed to arrive, I took my loaded rifle, and proposed to escort her to the pavilion. The old nurse followed us.

Marie, to whom I had said nothing about my having set the place to rights, entered the summer-house the first.

"See, Leopold," said she, "my arbor is in the same condition in which I left it yesterday; here are your flowers thrown about in disorder and trampled to pieces; and what astonishes me," added she, taking a bouquet of wild marigolds placed on the bench, "what astonishes me, is that this odious bouquet does not appear at all faded since yesterday. See, dear friend, it looks as if it had been freshly gathered."

I was speechless with rage and surprise. There was my morning's work utterly ruined; and the wild flowers, at whose freshness Marie was so much astonished, had insolently usurped the place of the roses that I had strewn all over the place.

"Calm yourself," said Marie, who noticed my agitation; "calm yourself, it is a passing thing; this insolent intruder will come here no more; let us put all thoughts of him on one side, as I do this nasty bunch of flowers."

I did not care to undeceive her for fear of alarming her: and without telling her that which ought, according to her, *to return no more*, had already returned, I let her, full of innocent indignation, crush the flowers under her foot. Then hoping that the day would come when I should discover my mysterious rival, I made her sit down between her nurse and myself.

Scarcely had we done so than Marie put her finger on my lips; some sounds deadened by the breeze and the rippling of the stream, had struck upon her ear. I listened; it was the notes of a guitar, the same melody that had filled me with fury on the previous evening. I made a movement to start from my seat, but a gesture of Marie's detained me.

"Leopold," whispered she, "restrain yourself, he is going to sing perhaps, and without doubt, from what he says, we shall learn who he is."

True enough, a manly plaintive voice came, from the depths of the wood, and mingled with the sad notes of the guitar a Spanish

romance, every word of which has remained deeply engraved on my memory.

“Why dost thou fly before me, Maria? Why dost thou fly from me, girl? Why this terror, when thou hearest me? I am truly formidable! I know how to love, suffer and sing!

“When through the slender branches of the cocoanut trees of the river I see glide thy form light and pure, a brilliancy troubles my sight, oh, Maria! and I believed I saw a spirit!

“And if I hear, oh, Maria! the enchanted accents which escape from thy mouth like a melody, it seems to me that my heart palpitates in my ear—and mingles a plaintive humming with thy harmonious voice.

“Alas! thy voice is sweeter for me than the song of birds who flutter in the heavens and who come from the coast of my country.

“Of my country where I was king, of my country where I was free!

“Free and king, girl! I would forget all that for thee; I would forget all, royalty, family, duties, vengeance, yes, vengeance! although the moment has come to gather this bitter and delicious fruit which ripens so late!”

The voice had sung the preceding verses with sad and frequent pauses; but in finishing these last words, it had taken a terrible accent.

“Oh, Maria! thou resemblest a beautiful palm, slender and upright on its stalks, and which mirrors in the eye of the lover, as the palm in the transparent water of the fountain.

“But, knowest thou not? there is sometimes, in the midst of the desert a hurricane, jealous of the happiness of the fountain of love; it runs, and the air and the sand mix under the flight of heavy wings; it envelopes the tree and the spring in a whirlwind of fire, and seems to shrivel up under the breath of death the green circle of leaves, which had the majesty of a crown and the grace of a cavalier.

“Tremble, oh, white daughter of Hispaniola!⁴ Tremble, lest soon a hurricane breaks over thee as over the desert.

“Then thou wilt regret the love which could have conductedst thou to me, as the joyous katha, the bird of salutation, guides through the sands of Africa the traveler to the oasis.

“And why dost thou repulse my love, Maria? I am king, and my head is raised above all human heads. Thou art white, and I am black; but the day should be united with the night to bring forth the daybreak and the sunset, which are more beautiful than either.”⁵





VIII.

A prolonged sigh on the quivering notes of the guitar accompanied these last words. I was beside myself. "King! black! slave!" A thousand incoherent ideas awakened by this mysterious song which I heard, whirled through my brain. A maddening desire to finish with this unknown being, who dared to mingle the name of Marie with songs of love and menace, took possession of me. I grasped my rifle convulsively and rushed from the summer-house. Marie stretched out her arms to detain me, but I was already in the thicket from which the voice appeared to have come. I searched the little wood thoroughly, I beat the bushes with the barrel of my rifle, I crept behind the trunks of the large trees, and walked through the high grass. Nothing! nothing, and always nothing! This fruitless search joined to the useless reflections on the romance that I had heard, added fuel to my anger. Was this insolent rival always to escape from me like a supernatural being? Could I never find out who he was, or meet him? At this moment, the tinkling of bells

roused me from my reverie. I turned. The dwarf Habibrah was at my side.

"Good-day, master," said he, and he bowed with respect; but with a sidelong glance full of triumphant malice at the anxiety which was imprinted on my face.

"Speak," exclaimed I, roughly, "have you seen any one in these woods?"

"No one except yourself, *señor mio*," answered he, calmly.

"Did you not hear a voice?" continued I.

The slave remained silent, as though seeking an evasive reply.

I was boiling. "Quick!" I exclaimed. "Answer quickly, wretch! did you hear a voice?"

He insolently fixed on me his eyes, round like those of a wild cat.

"*Que quiere decir usted* (What do you mean) by a voice, master? There are voices everywhere—there is the voice of the birds, there is the voice of the stream, there is the voice of the wind in the trees . . ."

I interrupted by shaking him roughly.

"Miserable buffoon, cease using me for your toy, or I will make you listen to another voice which comes from the barrel of my rifle. Answer at once; did you hear in these woods a man singing a Spanish song?"

"Yes, *señor*," answered he, calmly. "Listen, and I will tell you all about it. I was walking on the outskirts of the wood listening to what the silver bells of my *gorra*⁶ were telling me. Suddenly the wind came and joined to this concert some words of a language which you call Spanish. I came nearer to the voice, and I heard the end of a song that I had first heard when my age was counted by months and not by years, and my mother carried me slung at her back in a hammock of red and yellow wool. I love the language, it recalls to me the time when I was little without being a dwarf, a little child and not a buffoon; ah, well."

"Is that all that you have to say?" cried I, impatiently.

"Yes, *hermoso* (handsome) master; but if you like, I can tell you what the man is who sang."

I felt inclined to clasp him in my arms.

"Oh, speak!" I exclaimed; "speak! here is my purse, Habibrah, and ten others fuller than that shall be yours if you tell me what this man is."

He took the purse, opened it, and smiled.

"*Diez bolsas* (ten purses) fuller than this, but, *demonio!* that will make a fine *fanega* of good gold coins; but do not be impatient, young master, I am going to tell you all. Do

you remember, *señor*, the last words of the song, 'You are white, and I am black, but the day should be united with the night to bring forth the daybreak and sunset which are more beautiful than either.' Well, if this song is true, the dwarf Habibrah, your humble slave, born of a negress and a white, *señorito, de amor*, is more beautiful than you, I am the offspring of day and night, I am the daybreak or the sunset of which the Spanish song speaks, and you are nothing but the day. Therefore, I am more beautiful than you, *si usted quiere* (if you please), more beautiful than a white."

The dwarf accompanied this odd rigmarole with bursts of laughter.

I interrupted him again.

"Where, then, do you expect to arrive with these buffooneries? tell me who was singing in the wood."

"Certainly, master," replied the buffoon with a malicious look. "It is evident that *el hombre* (the man) who could sing of such buffooneries, as you call them, is no other than a fool like me! I have gained *las diez bolsas* (the ten purses)."

My hand was raised to chastise his insolence, when a wild shriek rang through the wood from the direction of the summer-house. It was Marie's voice—I darted, I ran, I flew,

wondering what fresh misfortune could be in store for us, and I arrived, out of breath, at the door of the pavilion. A terrible spectacle presented itself to my eyes. An enormous alligator, whose body was half concealed by the reeds and water plants, had thrust his monstrous head through one of the leafy sides of the summer-house ; his hideous widely opened mouth threatened a young negro of colossal height, who with one arm sustained Marie's fainting form, whilst with the other he had plunged the iron portion of a hoe between the sharp and pointed teeth of the monster. The reptile struggled fiercely against the bold and courageous hand that held him at bay. At this moment, as I appeared at the door, Marie uttered a cry of joy, and extricated herself from the negro's arm and threw herself into mine, crying :

“ I am saved ! ”

At Marie's movement and exclamation, the negro turned abruptly, crossed his arms on his breast, and casting a look of infinite sorrow upon my betrothed, remained immovable, without apparently seeing that the alligator was there, near him, having freed itself from the hoe, and was advancing to devour him. He was a courageous negro, and rapidly placing Marie on the knees of her nurse, already seated on a bench and

more dead than alive, I approached the monster and discharged my carbine into its yawning mouth. The animal opened and shut two or three times its bleeding jaws and languid eyes, but this was only a convulsive movement and suddenly it roared, rolled over upon its back, with its scaly feet stiffening in the air. It was dead.

The negro whose life I had so happily preserved turned his head and saw the last convulsive struggles of the monster; then he fixed his eyes on the ground, and, raising them slowly towards Marie, who had again cast herself into my arms, and in the accent of the deepest despair, he said to me :

“Pourque le has matad ?” (Why did you kill him ?)

Then he took a long stride without waiting for a reply, and entered the thicket, where he disappeared.

IX.

This terrible scene, its singular conclusion, the emotions of every kind which had preceded, accompanied and followed my vain researches in the wood, had made my brain whirl. Marie was still stupefied from her danger, and some time elapsed before we were able to communicate our incoherent thoughts, otherwise than by looks and clasping of the hands. At last I broke the silence.

"Come," said I, "Marie, let us leave this place, some fatality seems attached to it."

She rose eagerly, as if she had only been waiting for my permission, leaned upon my arm, and we left.

I asked her how it happened that succor had arrived from the negro, when the danger was so imminent, and if she knew who this slave was; for the coarse drawers which covered his nudity showed that he belonged to the lowest class of the inhabitants of the island.

"This man," replied Marie, "is no doubt one of my father's negroes who was at work near the river when the appearance of the

alligator made me scream, which warned you of my danger. All I know is, that he rushed out of the wood and came to my help."

"From which side did he come?" asked I.

"From the opposite side from which the song came, and into which you had just gone."

This statement upset the conclusion that I had drawn from the Spanish words that the negro had addressed to me, and from the song in the same language by my unknown rival. Other stories, besides, already presented themselves to me. This negro of great height, powerful muscular development, might well have been the adversary with whom I had struggled on the preceding night. In that case his half-clothed person would furnish a striking proof. The singer in the wood had said: "I am black"—a further proof. He had declared himself to be a king, and this one was only a slave, but I recollected, not without astonishment, the air of severity and majesty printed on his face, though of course accompanied by the characteristic signs of the African race, the brightness of his eyes, the whiteness of his teeth against the shining blackness of his skin, the large forehead surprising on a negro, the scornful swelling which gave to the thickness of his lips and nostrils something

proud and powerful, the nobleness of his courage, the beauty of his form, which, however thin and degraded by fatigue of daily work, had still a development, so to speak, herculean. It seemed to me that there was something imposing in the aspect of this slave, and I said that he would compare very well to a king. Then, recollecting a crowd of other incidents, my conjectures were arrested with a tremble of anger at this insolent negro; I wished to search for him again and chastise him . . . And then all my indecision came back to me. True enough, where was the foundation for so many of my suspicions? The island of Santo Domingo being largely in the possession of the Spanish, it happened that many of the negroes either had originally belonged to the colonists of Santo Domingo, or were born there, mixing the Spanish language with their jargon. And because this slave had addressed to me some Spanish words, was that a reason to suppose him the author of a romance in that language, which showed a cultured mind, according to my ideas, entirely unknown to the negroes? As for this singular reproach which he addressed me for having killed the alligator, he showed in the slave a distaste of the life that his position required, without which he had need, certainly, of having recourse to the

hypothesis of a love impossible for the daughter of his master. His presence in the rustic pavilion could be nothing but accidental ; his force and his height would go a great way to prove his identity with my nocturnal antagonist. Was it on these frail signs that I could place a terrible accusation before my uncle and deliver to the implacable vengeance of his pride, a poor slave who had shown so much courage to save Marie ?

At the moment that these ideas filled my brain, Marie dissipated them entirely by exclaiming, in her gentle voice :

“ My Leopold, we must seek out this brave negro ; without him I should have been lost ! You would have arrived too late.”

These few words had a decisive effect. It did not alter my determination to seek out the slave who had saved Marie, but it entirely altered the design with which I sought him. It was for a punishment ; this is for a recompense.

My uncle learned from me that he owed his daughter's life to one of his slaves, and he promised me his liberty, if I could find him in the crowd of these unfortunate ones.





X.

Up to that time my feelings had restrained me from going into those portions of the plantation where the slaves worked. It was too painful for me to see so much suffering which I could not alleviate. But, on the next day, my uncle asking me to accompany him on his tour of inspection, I accepted with eagerness, hoping to meet amongst the laborers the preserver of my much beloved Marie.

I had the opportunity in this walk of seeing how great a power the master exercises over his slaves, but at the same time I could perceive at what a cost this power was bought. The negroes, trembling at the presence of my uncle redoubled their efforts and activity; but there was hate in this terror.

Irrascible by habit, my uncle seemed vexed at being unable to discover any object upon which to vent his wrath, until Habibrah the buffoon, who always followed him, pointed out to him a negro, who overcome by heat and fatigue, was asleep under a clump of date-trees. My uncle stepped quickly up to him, rudely awakened him, and ordered him to

resume his work. The slave, terrified, rose, and in so doing disclosed a Bengal rose-tree upon which he had accidentally laid, and which my uncle took great pleasure in raising. The shrub was destroyed. The master, already irritated at what he called the idleness of his slave, became furious at this sight. Beside himself, he unhooked from his belt the whip with wire plaited thongs, which he always carried with him on his rounds, and raised his arm to strike the negro who had fallen on his knees. The whip did not fall. I shall never forget that moment. A powerful grasp suddenly arrested the hand of the planter. A negro (it was the very one that I was in search of) exclaimed in French :

“Punish me, for I have offended you ; but do not hurt my brother who has but broken your rose-tree.”

This unexpected interposition from the man to whom I owed Marie's safety, his manner, his look, and the haughty tone of his voice, struck me with surprise. But his generous intervention, far from causing my uncle to blush, only increased the rage of the incensed master, and turned his anger upon the new-comer. My uncle, exasperated, disengaged his arm from the grasp of the tall negro, and pouring out a volley of threats, again raised the whip to strike him. This

time the whip was torn from his hand. The negro broke the handle studded with iron nails as you would break a straw, and cast under his feet this shameful instrument of punishment. I was motionless with surprise, my uncle with rage; it was an unheard-of thing for him to see his authority thus outraged. His eyes appeared ready to start from their sockets; his blue lips trembled. The slave gazed upon him for an instant with a calm air; and then suddenly presented to him with dignity an axe that he held in his hand.

“White man,” said he, “if you wish to strike me, at least take this.”

My uncle, beside himself with rage, would certainly have complied with his request, for he stretched out his hand to grasp the dangerous weapon; when I in my turn interfered. I seized the axe, and threw it into the well of a *noria* (sugar-mill), which was close at hand.

“What have you done?” asked my uncle, angrily.

“I have saved you,” answered I, “from the unhappiness of striking the preserver of your daughter. It is to this slave that you owe Marie; it is the negro to whom you have promised liberty.”

It was an unfortunate moment in which to remind him of his promise. My words could

not soothe the wounded dignity of the planter.

“His liberty !” replied he, savagely. “Yes, he deserves that an end should be put to his slavery. His liberty ! we shall see what sort of liberty the members of a court-martial will accord him.”

These menacing words chilled me. In vain did Marie join her entreaties to mine. The negro whose negligence had been the cause of this scene was punished with a severe flogging, whilst the defender was thrown into the dungeons of Fort Galifet, under the terrible accusation of having assaulted a white man. For a slave who did this, it was capital punishment.

XI.

You may judge, gentlemen, how much all these circumstances excited all my curiosity and interest. I made every inquiry regarding the prison. They revealed to me some strange particulars. I learned that all his comrades displayed the greatest respect for the young negro. Slave as he was, he had but to make a sign to be implicitly obeyed. He was not born in the negro houses ; nor did any one know his father or mother ; all that was known of him was that some years ago, a slave ship had brought him to Santo Domingo. This circumstance rendered the influence which he exercised over all his companions the more extraordinary, not excepting black *créoles*, who, as you know, without doubt, gentlemen, profess the greatest contempt for the *Congos* ; an expression which they apply to all slaves brought direct from Africa.

Although he seemed a prey to deep dejection, his enormous strength, combined with his great skill, rendered him very valuable for the cultivation of the plantations. He could turn more quickly, and for a longer period

than a horse, the wheels of the *norias* (sugar-mills). Often in a single day he performed the work of ten of his companions, to save them from the punishment of their negligence or fatigue. He was, also, adored by the slaves; but the respect that they paid him was entirely different from the superstitious dread with which they looked upon Habi-brah the jester; it seemed to have something hidden; it was a kind of worship.

What was more strange was his affable, simple bearing with his equals, who felt it an honor to obey him; in strong contrast to the pride and haughtiness which he displayed to the overseers. It is true that these privileged slaves, the intermediary links in the chain of servitude, too often exceed the little brief authority that is delegated to them, and find a cruel pleasure in overwhelming those beneath them with work. It appears, nevertheless, that they could not prevent themselves respecting the sentiment of pride which had induced him to outrage my uncle. Not one of them, had ever dared to inflict any humiliating punishment. If they had done so, twenty negroes would have stepped forward to take his place; and he, immovable, would assist at the performance, as if they were merely performing a duty. This strange man was known throughout the negro quarter as *Pierrot*.





XII.

All these circumstances took a firm hold upon my youthful imagination. Marie, inspired by compassion and gratitude, applauded my enthusiasm, and Pierrot excited our interest so much, that I determined to see him and serve him. I pondered over means of speaking to him.

Although very young, as the nephew of one of the richest colonists in the Cap, I was captain in the Acul Militia. Fort Galifet was confided to their care, and to a detachment of the Yellow Dragoons, whose chief, who was ordinarily an under officer of this company, had the command of the fort; I found that at this time the commander was the brother of a poor planter to whom I had had the good fortune to render an important service, and who was entirely devoted to me . . .

Here the listeners interrupted d'Auverney by guessing Thaddeus.

You are right, gentlemen, replied the captain. You understand, that it was not difficult to obtain from him access to the negro's

cell. As a captain in the militia, I had, of course, the right to visit the fort. However, to evade the suspicions of my uncle, whose rage was still unabated, I took care to go there at the time of his noonday siesta. All the soldiers too, except those on guard, were asleep. Guided by Thaddeus I arrived at the door of the cell; Thaddeus opened it, and then retired. I entered.

The negro was seated, for, on account of his height, he could not stand upright. He was not alone; an enormous dog rose with a growl, and moved toward me. "Rask!" cried the negro. The young dog ceased growling, and again laid down at his master's feet, and began eating some coarse food.

I was in uniform; and the daylight that came through the loophole in the wall of the cell was so feeble that Pierrot could not distinguish who I was.

"I am ready," said he, in a calm voice.

Finishing these words, he partly rose.

"I am ready," he repeated.

"I thought," remarked I, surprised at the ease with which he moved, "I thought that you were in irons."

My voice trembled with emotion. The prisoner did not appear to notice it.

He shoved some pieces towards me with his foot.

“Irons ! I have broken them.”

There was something in the tone in which he uttered these words, that seemed to say : *I was not born to wear fetters.* I continued :

“They did not tell me that you were permitted to have a dog.”

“It was I who brought him in.”

I was more and more astonished. The door of the cell was closed on the outside with three bolts. The loophole was scarcely six inches in width, and had two iron bars across it. He seemed to divine my thoughts, and raising as nearly erect as the low roof would permit, he pulled out with ease a large stone placed under the loophole, removed the iron bars, and displayed an opening sufficiently large to permit two men to pass through. This opening looked upon a grove of bananas and cocoanut trees which covered the hill upon which the fort was built.

Surprise rendered me dumb ; at that moment a ray of light fell on my face. The prisoner started as if he had accidentally trodden upon a snake, and his head struck against the ceiling of the cell. A strange mixture of opposing feelings, an expression of hatred, kindness and astonishment passed rapidly in his eyes ; but recovering himself with an effort, his face once more became cold and calm, and he fixed upon me an indifferent look. He

regarded me as if I was entirely unknown to him.

"I can live two days more without eating," said he.

I made a movement of horror; I saw how thin he had become. He added: "My dog will only eat from my hand, and had I not enlarged the loop-hole, poor Rask would have died of hunger. It is better for it to be me than him, since I am condemned to death."

"No," I said; "no, you shall not die of hunger."

He misunderstood me.

"Without doubt," answered he, with a smile, "I could have lived two days yet without eating; but I am ready, officer; to-day is better than to-morrow; do not hurt Rask."

Then I understood what he meant when he said *I am ready*. Accused of a crime the punishment of which was death, he believed that I had come to announce his immediate execution; and yet this man endowed with herculean strength, with all the avenues of escape open to him, had, in a calm and child-like manner, repeated: *I am ready!*

"Do not hurt Rask," said he, once more.

I could restrain myself no longer.

"What!" I exclaimed, "not only do you take me for your executioner, but you think so

meanly of my humanity, that you believe I would injure this poor dog, who has never done me any harm!"

He paused, then he said, in a changed voice:

"White man," said he, offering me his hand, "white man, pardon me, I love my dog, and," added he after a short silence, "your race have cruelly injured me."

I embraced him, I clasped his hand, I did my best to undeceive him.

"Do you not know me?" said I.

"I knew that you were white, and to the white, though they may be good, a negro is such an insignificant thing; besides you have injured me."

"In what manner?" exclaimed I, in surprise.

"Have you not twice saved my life?"

This strange accusation made me smile. He perceived it, and continued it bitterly:

"Yes, I ought to be glad. You saved me from an alligator, and from a planter, and, what is worse, you have taken from me the right to hate you. I am very unhappy."

The strangeness of his language and of his ideas surprised me no longer; it was in harmony with himself.

"I owe more to you than you can owe to me. I owe you the life of my betrothed Marie."

He started as though he had received some terrible shock.

“*Maria !*” repeated he in stifled tones ; and his head fell into his trembling hands, whilst his bosom rose and fell with heavy sighs.

I confess that once again my suspicions were aroused, but without anger or jealousy. I was too near my happiness, and he too near death, to be like a rival, even had I done so, his forlorn condition would have excited my compassion and sympathy.

At last he raised his head.

“Go,” said he ; “do not thank me.”

After a pause he added :

“I am not however of a rank inferior to your own.”

These words brought ideas to me which roused my curiosity ; I urged him to tell me who he was, and what he had suffered. He maintained an obstinate silence.

My proceedings had touched him, my offers of service and my entreaties appeared to have vanquished his distaste for life. He left his cell, and in a short time returned with some bananas and a large cocoanut. Then he re-closed the opening and began to eat. As we conversed, I remarked that he spoke French and Spanish with equal facility, and that his education had not been entirely neglected.

He knew many Spanish songs, which he sang with great feeling. This man was so inexplicable, from all reports, that the purity of his language had not struck me. I tried, anew to know the cause; he remained silent. At last I left him with regret, after having urged on my faithful Thaddeus to permit him every possible indulgence.

XIII.

Every day at the same hour I saw him. His position rendered me very uneasy, for in spite of all my prayers, my uncle obstinately refused to withdraw his complaint. I did not conceal my fears from Pierrot; he listened to me with indifference.

Often Rask would come in in spite of our being together, with a large palm-leaf tied round his neck. The negro would take it off, read some lines traced upon it in an unknown language, and then tear it up. I had ceased to question him in any matters connected with himself.

One day I entered without his taking notice of me. He was seated with his back to the door of the cell, and was singing in a melancholy tone the Spanish air, *Yo que soy contrabandista* (I who a smuggler am). When he had completed it, he turned sharply round to me, and exclaimed:

“Brother, if you ever doubt me, promise that you will cast aside all suspicion on hearing me sing this air.”

His look was earnest; I promised what he asked, without knowing as to what he meant by these words: *if ever you doubt me*. He took the empty half of a cocoanut which he had brought in on the day of my first visit, and had preserved ever since, filled it with palm wine, begged me to put my lips to it, and then drank it off at a draught. From that day he always called me *brother*.

However I commenced to cherish some hope. My uncle was no longer so irritated. The preparations for the festivities connected with his daughter's wedding had caused his feelings to flow in gentle channels. Marie joined her entreaties to mine. Each day I pointed out to him that Pierrot had had no desire to insult him, but had merely interposed to prevent him from committing an act of perhaps too great severity; that the negro had at the risk of his life saved Marie from certain death; that we owed to him—he his daughter, me my betrothed; and besides, Pierrot was the strongest of all his slaves (for now I sought to save his life, not to obtain his liberty), that he was able to do the work of ten men, and that his single arm was sufficient to put the rollers of a sugar-mill in motion. He listened to me, and once or twice hinted that he might not follow up his complaint.

I did not say a word to the negro of the change in my uncle, hoping that I should announce to him his entire liberty, if I obtained it. What astonished me greatly was, that though he believed that he was under sentence of death, yet he made no effort to avail himself of the means of escape that lay in his power. I spoke to him of this.

"I am forced to remain," said he coldly, "they would think that I was afraid."





XIV.

One morning, Marie came to me. She was radiant, and upon her gentle face was a sweeter expression than even the joys of pure love. It was the knowledge of a good deed.

"Listen," said she. "In three days, August 22, we shall be married. We shall soon . . ."

I interrupted her.

"Marie, do not say *soon*, when there is yet three days."

She blushed and smiled.

"Do not be foolish, Leopold," replied she. "An idea has struck me which has made me very happy. You know that yesterday I went to town with my father to buy all sorts of things for our wedding. It is not that I care for jewels and diamonds which do not make me appear more beautiful to you. I would give all the pearls in the world for a single flower from the bouquet which that odious man with the marigolds destroyed; but no matter. My father wished to buy me everything, and I pretended to want them to please him. There was a *basquina* of Chinese satin embroidered with flowers, which I admired. It was very

expensive, but that is singular indeed. My father noticed that the dress had attracted my attention. As we were returning home, I begged him to promise me a boon after the manner of the knights of old—you know how he delights to be compared to them. He vowed on his honor that he would grant me whatever it was. He thought it was the *basquina* of Chinese satin; but no, it is Pierrot's life. This will be my nuptial present."

I could not refrain from embracing this angel in my arms. My uncle's word was sacred; and whilst Marie ran to him to claim its fulfilment, I hastened to Fort Galifet to convey the glad news to Pierrot.

"Brother," exclaimed I, as I entered, "brother! rejoice! your life is saved. Marie has asked it as a wedding present from her father."

The slave shuddered.

"Marie—wedding—my life! How does all this go together?"

"That is very simple," answered I. "Marie, whose life you saved, is to be married."

"To whom?" exclaimed the slave, and his look was wandering and terrible.

"Do you not know?" I replied softly: "To me."

His formidable face became benevolent and resigned.

"Ah! it is true," he replied; "it is to you. And when is the day?"

"On August the 22d."

"On August the 22d—are you crazy?" cried he, with terror and anguish painted on his countenance.

He stopped; I looked at him with astonishment. After a short pause he clasped my hand—

"Brother, I owe you so much that I must give you a warning. Trust to me, take up your residence in Cap, and get married before the 22d."

In vain I entreated him to explain his mysterious words.

"Farewell," said he, with solemnity; "I have perhaps said too much, but I hate ingratitude even more than perjury."

I left him, full of indecisions and uneasiness; which were soon effaced by the thoughts of my happiness.

That very day my uncle withdrew his charge. I returned to the fort to release Pierrot. Thaddeus, knowing him to be free entered with me into the prison. He was not there! Rask finding himself alone, came up to me wagging his tail. To his neck was fastened a palm-leaf; I took it and read these words: "*Thanks; for the third time you have saved my life. Brother, do not*

forget your promise." Underneath, in lieu of signature, the words: "*Yo que soy contrabandista.*"

Thaddeus was even more astonished than I; he was ignorant of the enlargement of the loop-hole, and firmly believed that the negro had changed himself into a dog. I allowed him to remain in this belief, contenting myself with making him promise to say nothing of what he had seen.

I wished to take Rask away. On leaving the fort he plunged into a thicket and disappeared.

XV.

My uncle was furiously enraged at the escape of the slave. He ordered a diligent search to be made for him, and wrote to the governor placing Pierrot entirely at his disposal should he be re-taken.

The 22d of August arrived. My union with Marie was celebrated with pomp at the parish church of Acul. How happily did that day commence from which all our misfortunes were to date ! I was intoxicated with a joy that one does not understand who has not experienced it. I had entirely forgotten Pierrot and his sinister warning. The evening, impatiently waited for, came at last. My young wife had retired to her apartments where I could not follow her as quickly as I should have wished. A fastidious duty, but indispensable, claimed me first. My position as a captain of militia required me that evening to make the round of the guards posted about Acul ; this precaution was absolutely necessary owing to the troubles in the colony, by occasional outbreaks amongst the negroes, which being promptly repressed had taken

place in the month preceding June and July, as well as the first of August, in the plantations of Thibaud and Lagoscette, and especially by the bad dispositions of the free mulattoes, whom the recent execution of the rebel Ogo had exasperated. My uncle was the first to recall me to the recollection of my duty. I had no option but to yield, and, putting on my uniform, I went out. I visited the first few guards without discovering any cause of alarm ; but when towards midnight, as half buried in my own thoughts I was patrolling the shores of the bay, I perceived upon the horizon a ruddy light rising, extending in the direction of Limonade and Saint Louis du Morin. At first the soldiers and I attributed it to some accidental conflagration ; but after a moment the flames became so vivid, the smoke rising before the wind grew so thick, that I ordered an immediate return to the Fort to give the alarm, and to request that help be sent. In passing through the quarters of the negroes who belonged to our estate, I was surprised at the extreme disorder that reigned there. The majority of the slaves were afoot, and were talking together with great earnestness. One strange name, *Bug-Jargal*, pronounced with respect, occurred continually in the almost unintelligible jargon. From a word or two which I gathered here and there, I learned

that the negroes of the northern districts were in open revolt, and had set fire to the dwelling-houses and the plantations on the other side of Cap. Passing through a marshy spot, I discovered a quantity of hatchets and pickaxes hidden in the twigs and (mangliers). Justly suspicious, I immediately put the whole of the Acul militia under arms, and I ordered the inspection of the slaves ; all obeyed calmly.

However, the ravages seemed to grow at every moment and to approach Limbé. It seemed as though one could distinguish the noise of the artillery and fusillade. Towards two o'clock in the morning, my uncle, whom I had awakened, could not remain quiet and ordered me to leave in Acul a part of the militia under the command of a lieutenant ; and, whilst my poor Marie was sleeping or waiting for me, obeying my uncle, who was, as I have mentioned, a member of the Provincial Assembly, I took the road to Cap, with the rest of the soldiers. I shall never forget the appearance of the town as I approached. The flames which devoured the plantation about it, threw a lurid light upon the scene, which was only partially obscured by the clouds of smoke which the wind drove into the narrow streets. Immense masses of sparks rose from the burning heaps of sugar-cane, and fell like fiery snow on the roofs of the houses, and on the

rigging of the vessels at anchor in the roadsteads, at every moment threatening the town of Cap with as serious a conflagration as was already raging in its immediate neighborhood. It was a terrible sight to witness the terror-stricken inhabitants exposing their lives to preserve from so destructive a visitant their habitations, which perhaps was the last portion of property left to them ; whilst, on the other hand, the vessels, taking advantage of a fair wind, and fearing the same fate, had already set sail, and were gliding over an ocean reddened by the flames of the conflagration.





XVI.

Stunned by the cannon of the forts, by the cries of the fugitives, and the distant crash of falling buildings, I did not know in what direction to lead my men, when I encountered on the parade-ground the captain of the Yellow Dragoons, who helped to guide us. I will not stop, gentlemen, to describe to you the picture which this lamentable fire presented. Others have painted these first disasters of Cap, and I must pass quickly over these recollections where there was so much fire and blood. I will content myself with saying that the insurgent slaves were, they said, already masters of Dondon, of Terrier-Rouge, of the town of Ouanaminte, and of the unfortunate plantations of Limbé; this filled me with uneasiness, owing to its proximity to Acul.

I made all speed to the house of the governor, M. de Blanchelande. All was in confusion there, including the head of the master. I asked for orders, and begged that instant measures be taken for the security of Acul, which they feared the insurgents had already

threatened. He had with him M. de Rouvray, the Brigadier, and one of the principal landholders in the island, M. de Touzard, the Lieutenant-colonel of the Regiment of Cap, some members of the Colonial and Provincial Assemblies, and several of the leading colonists. As I entered, all were engaged in a confused argument.

"Your Excellency," said a member of the Provincial Assembly, "it is only too true, these are the slaves, and not the free mulattoes ; we have long predicted it."

"You make that statement without believing it," bitterly answered a member of the *Colonial*, otherwise known as the *general*. "You say it to gain credit at our expense ; and you were so far from expecting a real rising of the slaves that these intrigues of your Assembly which in 1789, augured the famous and ridiculous revolt of three thousand slaves on Cap mountain, when there was one national volunteer killed, and that most likely by his own comrades."

"I repeat," replied the *Provincial*, "that we can see farther than you. It is simple. We remain here to study the details of the colony, whilst you and your Assembly go to France to make some absurd proposals ; which ends met with the reprimands of the national representation ; *Ridiculus mus !*"

The member of the *Colonial Assembly* answered with a sneer :

“ Our fellow-citizens re-elected us unanimously ! ”

“ It was your Assembly, ” retorted the other, “ that caused the execution of that poor devil who neglected to wear a tricolored cockade in a *café*, and who commenced a petition for the mulatto Lacombe which commences by these obsolete words, ‘ In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ! ’ ”

“ It is false, ” exclaimed the member of the General Assembly. “ It is the struggle of principles against privileges, of *bossus* and *crochus* ! ”

“ I have always thought it, sir, that you were *Independent*. ”

At this reproach to a member of the Provisional Assembly, his adversary replied with a triumphant air :

“ You confess that you are a *White Cockade* : I leave you under the weight of that confession. ”

The quarrel would have been pushed further, if the governor had not interposed.

“ Ah, gentlemen ! what has this to do with the pressing danger that threatens us ? Advise me, here are reports that I have received. The revolt began this night at ten o’clock amongst the slaves in the Turpin plantation. The

negroes, headed by an English slave named Bouckmann, were joined by the blacks from the plantations of Clément, Trémés, Flaville and Noë. They set fire to all the plantations, and massacred the colonists with the most unheard-of barbarities. I can make you comprehend all the horrors by one single detail. The standard of the insurgents is the body of a white child on the point of a pike."

A cry of horror interrupted M. de Blanchelande.

"So much," continued he, "for what has passed outside. Within, all is confusion. Several inhabitants of Cap have killed their slaves; fear has rendered them cruel. The calmest and bravest have confined their negroes under key. The poor whites' accuse the free mulattoes of being the cause of these disasters. Several mulattoes have come near being victims of the popular fury. I have had to grant them a place of refuge in a church, guarded by a regiment of soldiers. Now, to prove that they have nothing in common with the insurgents, the mulattoes have asked me for a post to defend and some arms."

"Do nothing," cried a voice which I recognized; it was that of the planter suspected of being a mulatto, with whom I had had a duel. "Do nothing, M. le Gouverneur; give no arms to the mulattoes."

"You do not want to fight then?" asked a planter, bruskly.

The other did not appear to hear him, and continued :

"The mulattoes are our worst enemies. Those alone are to be feared. I claim that it is a revolt, their revolt, and not the negroes'. What have the negroes to do with it?"

The poor man hoped by his abuse of the mulattoes to separate himself from them entirely, and then destroy in the minds of the whites, who listened to him, the opinion which threw him out in this despised class. There was too much cowardice in this assemblage for him to succeed. A murmur of disgust rose up on all sides.

"Yes, sir," said old M. de Rouvray, "yes, the slaves *have* something to do with it, they are forty to three: and we should be in a serious plight if we could only oppose the negroes and the mulattoes with whites like you."

The planter bit his lips.

"General," said the governor, "what do you think of the mulattoes' petition?"

"Give them weapons, governor!" replied M. de Rouvray, "let us make use of every willing hand." And turning to the colonist of doubtful color, "Do you hear, sir? Go arm yourself."

The humiliated planter slunk away, filled with concentrated rage.

Meanwhile, the cries of distress which rang through the town reached, from time to time, the governor's house, and recalled to the members of this conference the subject which had brought them together. M. de Blanchelande hastily penciled a few words, and handed it to one of his aides-de-camp, and broke the silence with which the assemblage listened to this frightful murmur.

"Gentlemen, the mulattoes will receive arms; but there remain other questions to be settled."

"The Provincial Assembly should at once be convoked," said the planter who had been speaking when first I entered.

"The Provincial Assembly?" retorted his antagonist of the Colonial Assembly: "what is the Provincial Assembly?"

"Because you are a member of the Colonial Assembly," replied the White Cockade.

The Independent interrupted him.

"I know no more of the Colonial than the Provincial. There is only the General Assembly, do you hear, sir?"

"Ah, well, gentlemen," said the White Cockade, "I say for my part that there is only the National Assembly of Paris."

"Convoke the Provincial Assembly," laughingly replied the Independent, "as if it was not dissolved the moment that the General Assembly decides to hold its meetings here."

A universal exclamation broke out in the audience, tired of this odious discussion.

"Gentlemen," cried a planter, "whilst we are losing time with this nonsense, what is to become of my cotton and my cochineal?"

"And my four hundred thousand plants of indigo at Limbé?" added another.

"And my negroes, for whom I paid thirty dollars a-head all round?" said the captain of a slave ship.

"Each minute that you waste," continued another colonist, "costs me, watch and tariff in hand, ten quintals of sugar, which at seventeen piastres the quintal makes one hundred and thirty livres, ten sous, in French money."

"The Colonial, that you call General, usurps!" continued the other disputer, overpowering the tumult of voices; "it remains with Port-au-Prince to fabricate the orders for two leagues of ground and two days' duration, but that she leaves us alone here. Cap belongs to the Provincial Congress of the North, and only to her!"

"I claim," continued the Independent, "that his excellency, the governor, has not

the right to convoke any other assembly than the General Assembly of the representatives of the colony, presided over by M. de Cadusch."

"But where is he, your president, M. de Cadusch?" demanded the White Cockade; "where is your assembly? Four members have not yet arrived, whilst the Provincial are all here. Is it that you alone wish to represent an assembly, a whole colony?"

This rivalry of the two deputies, faithful echoes of their respective assemblies, continued until the governor intervened.

"Gentlemen, when will you ever finish your eternal assemblies: *Provincial, General, Colonial, National?* Will you aid the decisions of this assemblage by making it invoke three or four others?"

"Morbleu," said M. de Rouvray in a voice of thunder, striking the table violently, "what accursed talkers! What do we care about these two assemblies which dispute the step like two companies of grenadiers marching to an assault! Ah, well! summon both of them, your excellency and I will form two regiments to march against the negroes; we shall see whether their guns will make as much noise as their tongues."

After this vigorous outburst he turned towards his neighbor (it was I) and whispered:

“What can be done between these two assemblies which claim sovereign rights equal to the king of France? They are fine talkers and advocates who spoil everything here as well as in the capital. If I had the honor of being lieutenant-governor for the king, I would throw all these rascals out of the door. I would say: The king reigns and I govern. I would take the responsibility of sending all these pretended representatives to the devil, and with a dozen Saint Louis crosses, promised in the name of his majesty, I would sweep away all the rebels in the Island of Tortue, formerly inhabited by brigands like these. Note what I say, young man. The *philosophers* have created the *philanthropists*, who produced the *négrophiles*, who are responsible for the *mangeurs de blancs*, who are thus called whilst waiting for a Greek or Latin name. The fictitious liberal ideas which elate all in France, are poison in the tropics. One must treat the negroes with gentleness, but they must not be upset by sudden liberation. All the horrors which you see to-day in Santo Domingo are born in the Massiac Club, and this insurrection of the slaves nothing but the counterpart of the fall of the Bastile.”

Whilst the old soldier thus explained to me his political views, rather narrow-minded, but full of frankness and conviction, the stormy

argument continued. A certain planter, one of the small number who partook of the revolutionary frenzy, and who called himself Citizen-General C——, because he had assisted at a few sanguinary executions, exclaimed :

“We must have punishments rather than battles. Nations wish terrible examples ; let us terrify the negroes ! It was I who quieted the revolt of June and July by lining the approach to my house with fifty slaves’ heads like palms. Let each one join the proposition that I am going to make. Let us defend the entrances to Cap with the slaves who still remain.”

“How ! What imprudence,” was heard on all sides.

“You do not understand me, gentlemen,” replied the Citizen-General. “Let us make a ring of negro heads around the city, from Fort Picolet to Point Caracole. Their insurgent comrades will not dare to approach us. I must sacrifice for the commune cause in a like moment. I dedicate myself first. I have five hundred slaves who have remained faithful—I offer them.”

A movement of horror greeted this proposition.

“Abominable ! Horrible !” cried all.

“Steps of this sort have lost all,” said a planter. “If the execution of the insurgents

of June and July had not been so hurried on, we should have held in our hands the clue to the conspiracy, which the axe of the executioner cut."

Citizen C—— was silenced for a moment by this outburst; then in an injured tone he muttered:

"I did not think of having been suspected of cruelty. I am connected with the négrophiles; I correspond with Briscot and Pruneau de Pomme-Gouge, in France; Hans Sloane, in England; Magaw, in America; Pezell, in Germany; Olivarius, in Denmark; Wadstiohm, in Sweden; Peter Paulus, in Holland; Aven-daño, in Spain; and the Abbé Pierre Tamburini, in Italy."

His voice rose as he ran through the names of the négrophiles. He terminated, saying:

"But, there are no true philosophers here."

For the third time M. de Blanchelande asked if any one had anything further to propose.

"Your Excellency," cried one, "here is my advice, let us embark on board the *Leopard*, which lies at anchor in the harbor."

"Let us put a price on the head of Bouckmann," exclaimed another.

"Send a report of what has taken place to the Governor of Jamaica," suggested a third.

"A good idea, so that he may again ironically send us five hundred muskets!" sneered a member of the Provincial Assembly. "Your Excellency, let us send the news to France, and wait!"

"Wait! Wait!" exclaimed M. de Rouvray; "and do you think that the blacks will wait? And do you think that the flames that encircle your town will wait? M. de Touzard, let the tocsin be sounded, and send dragoons and grenadiers in search of the main body of the rebels. Your Excellency, form a camp in the eastern division of the island; plant military posts at Trou and at Vallières; I will take charge of the plain of Dauphin; I will direct the work; my grandfather who was field master of the Normandie Regiment, has served under Marshal de Vauban; I have studied Folord and Bezout, and I have had some practice in the defense of a country. Besides the plains of Fort Dauphin, nearly surrounded by the sea and the Spanish frontier, have the form of peninsulas and protect themselves; the peninsula of Mole offers a like advantage. Let us use all that, and act; but let us lose no more time, for the moment for action has arrived."

The positive and energetic speech of the veteran hushed all differences of opinion. The general was right. That secret knowledge

which every one possesses most conducive to his own interests, caused all to support the proposal of General de Rouvray; and whilst the governor with a warm clasp of the hand showed to the brave officer general, that he appreciated the value of his counsels, even though they had been given as orders, and the importance of his help, all the colonists urged for the immediate carrying out of the proposals.

The two deputies of rival assemblies, alone, seemed to separate from the general adhesion, and murmured the words *encroachment of the executive power, hasty decision and responsibility*.

I seized the opportunity to obtain from M. de Blanchelande the permission that I so ardently desired; and I left in order to muster my company, to take the road to Acul, in spite of the fatigue which overpowered all, except myself.

XVII.

Day began to break. I was in the market-place waking the soldiers, who were lying on their cloaks, and mingled pell-mell with the Red and Yellow Dragoons, fugitives from the country, cattle, bleating and lowing, and baggage of every description brought into the city by planters. I began to pick out my men from this disorder when I saw a yellow dragoon covered with dust and perspiration, ride up at full speed. I hastened to meet him, and from the few broken words which he uttered, I learned with consternation that my fears were realized ; that the insurrection had spread to Acul, and that the negroes were besieging Fort Galifet, where the militia and the planters had taken refuge. I must tell you that this fort was by no means a strong one, for in Santo Domingo they called any earthwork a fort.

There was not a moment to lose. I mounted as many of my soldiers as I could procure horses for ; and, guided by the dragoon, I reached my uncle's plantation about ten o'clock.





I cast a glance at the enormous estate, which was nothing but a sea of flame, over which hovered huge clouds of smoke, through which every now and then the wind bore trunks of trees covered with sparks. A terrible rustling mingled with the crackling, and the murmurs seemed to reply to the distant yells of the negroes which we already heard without yet seeing them. I only had one thought, and the destruction of all this wealth, which was destined for me, did not distress me, it was the safety of Marie. Marie safe, what mattered anything else? I knew that she had taken refuge in the fort, and I prayed to God that I might arrive in time. This hope alone sustained me in my anxiety, and gave me the strength and courage of a lion.

At length a turn in the road permitted us to see Fort Galifet. The tricolor yet floated on its walls, and a well-sustained fire outlined the contour of its walls. I uttered a shout of joy. "Gallop, spur on! Loosen the bridles!" cried I to my comrades. And, redoubling our pace, we dashed across the fields in the direction of the fort, from which one could see my uncle's house, doors and windows broken in, but still standing, and red from the conflagration which had not reached it, because the wind blew from the sea and because it was isolated from the plantation.

A crowd of negroes, ambuscaded in this house, showed themselves at this moment at all the windows and on the roof; and the torches, the pikes, the axes, sparkled in the midst of the brisk fire of musketry which was kept up on the fort whilst another crowd of their comrades mounted, fell, mounted again, without ceasing, the besieged walls, which they had charged with shells. The black men always returning repulsed and always springing up again on the gray walls looked like a swarm of ants endeavoring to scale the shell of a tortoise, and shaken off by each movement of the sluggish reptile.

We reached at last the outer works of the fort. With eyes fixed upon the banner which still floated above it, I encouraged my soldiers, in the name of their families, shut like mine within these walls that we were going to assist. A general cheer was the reply, and, forming a column, I was preparing to give the order to charge on the besieging troops.

At this moment a loud yell arose from the enclosure of the fort, and a cloud of smoke enveloped the building rolling several times over the walls, where it escaped like roar of a furnace, and as it cleared away we saw a red flag floating over Fort Galifet. All was over.

XVIII.

I cannot tell you what my feelings were at this terrible spectacle. The fort was taken, its defenders slain, twenty families massacred—all this general disaster ; but I confess, to my shame, that I thought not of this. Marie was lost to me ! lost, after having been made mine but a few brief hours before ! Lost, perhaps, through my fault ; if I had not left her the preceding night to go to Cap on the orders of my uncle, I should have been by her side to defend her, or at least to die near her and with her. These thoughts raised my grief to madness, my despair was born of remorse.

Meanwhile, my maddened companions had cried : Vengeance ! and, with sabres between their teeth and pistols in their hand, they burst into the ranks of the victorious insurgents. Although far superior in numbers the negroes fled at their approach, but we could see them on our right and left, before and behind us, slaughtering the whites, and casting fuel on the flames. Our rage was increased by their cowardly conduct.

Through a postern gate, Thaddeus, covered with wounds, presented himself before me. "Captain," said he, "your Pierrot is a sorcerer, an *obi*, as these infernal negroes call him—a devil. We were holding our position; you arrived, and all was saved, when he penetrated into the fort. I do not know how, and see!—As for your uncle, his family, and Madam . . ."

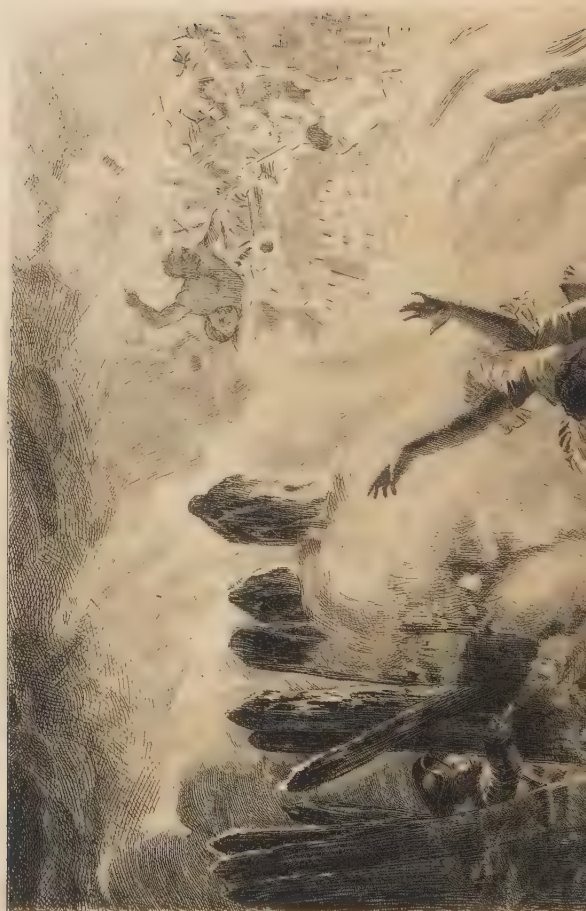
"Marie," interrupted I, "where is Marie?"

At this instant a tall black burst through a blazing hedge, carrying a young woman who shrieked and struggled in his arms. The woman was Marie, the negro was Pierrot!

"Traitor," cried I.

I fired my pistol at him; one of the rebels threw himself in the way, and fell dead. Pierrot turned, and seemed to address a few words to me; then he plunged with his prey into a mass of burning sugar-canes. A moment afterwards a huge dog followed, carrying in his mouth a cradle in which lay my uncle's youngest child. I also recognized the dog; it was Rask. Transported with rage, I fired my second pistol at him; but I missed him.

I followed on their tracks like a madman; but my night march, so many hours spent without taking rest or food, my fears for Marie, the sudden fall from the height of





H. Maroon sr.

George Rouse sr.

happiness to the depth of misery, all these emotions of the soul had exhausted me more than the fatigue of the body. After a few steps I staggered ; a cloud seemed to come over me, and I fell senseless.

XIX.

When I revived I was in my uncle's ruined house, supported in the arms of Thaddeus. This faithful Thaddeus gazed upon me with the deepest anxiety.

"Victory!" exclaimed he, as he felt my pulse begin to beat. "Victory! the negroes are routed and my captain has come to life again."

I interrupted his exclamations of joy by my eternal question :

"Where is Marie?"

I had not yet collected my ideas: the sentiment and not the remembrance of my misfortune remained with me. Thaddeus hung his head. Then my memory returned to me; and like a hideous dream, I recalled the terrible nuptial night, and the tall negro carrying away Marie in his arms through the flames. The frightful fire which had broken out in the colony, and which showed to the whites some enemies in their slaves, and made me see in Pierrot, the good, the generous, and the devoted, who owed his life three times to me, a monster of ingratitude and a rival. The





carrying off of my wife on the very night of our marriage proved to me, what I had at first suspected, and I now knew that the singer in the woods was no other than the ravisher of Marie. What a change in so few hours !

Thaddeus told me that he had vainly pursued Pierrot and his dog ; that the negroes retired, although their number could have easily destroyed my small troop, and that the burning of the property of my family continued, without the possibility of its being arrested.

I asked him if they knew what had become of my uncle in whose room they had taken me. He took my hand in silence, and, leading me to the alcove, drew the curtains.

My unhappy uncle was there, stretched upon his blood-stained couch, with a dagger driven deeply into his heart. By the tranquil expression of his face it was easy to see that the blow had been struck during his sleep. The bed of the dwarf Habibrah, who always slept at the foot of his master's couch, was also stained with gore, and the same crimson traces could be seen upon the laced coat of the poor fool, thrown upon the floor a few paces from the bed.

I did not doubt for a moment that the dwarf had died a victim to his affection for my uncle, and that he had been murdered by

his comrades, perhaps in defending his master. I bitterly reproached myself for the prejudice which had caused me to form so erroneous an estimate of Habibrah and Pierrot; I mingled with my tears for my uncle's untimely end some regrets for the faithful Habibrah.

By my orders his body was carefully searched for, but in vain. I imagined that the negroes had cast the dwarf into the flames; and I gave instructions that, in the funeral service over my uncle's remains, prayers should be said for the repose of the soul of the devoted Habibrah.

XX.

Fort Galifet had been destroyed, our house was in ruins; a longer sojourn on these ruins was useless and impossible. That same evening we returned to Cap.

There, a severe fever seized me. The effort that I had made to overcome my despair had been too violent. The spring strained too much, snapped. I became delirious. All my deluded hopes, my profaned love, my betrayed friendship, my lost future, and, above all, the implacable jealousy, unbalanced my reason. It seemed as if fire flowed in my veins; my head seemed ready to burst; my heart was filled with rage. I pictured to myself Marie in the arms of another lover, subject to the power of a master, of a slave, of Pierrot! They told me afterwards that I sprang from my bed, and that it took six men to prevent me from dashing out my brains against the wall. Why did I not die then!

This crisis passed. The doctors, the care of Thaddeus, and the latent powers of youth, conquered the malady, this malady which could have proved such an advantage. I

recovered in about ten days, and I did not grieve. I was content to live some time for vengeance.

Hardly convalescent, I went to M. de Blanchelande, to ask for a commission. He wished to give me a post to defend ; I begged him to admit me as volunteer in one of the movable columns which were sent out from time to time against the blacks, to sweep the country. Cap had been hastily fortified. The revolt had made terrible progress. The negroes of Port au Prince had begun to show symptoms of disaffection ; Biassou commanded those at Limbé, Dondon, and Acul ; Jean-François had proclaimed himself generalissimo of the rebels of Maribarou ; Bouckmann, who became celebrated later, by his tragic ending while ravaging with his brigands the plains of Limonade ; and lastly, the bands of Morne-Rouge had elected for their chief a negro called Bug-Jargal.

The character of the last if report was to be believed, contrasted singularly with the ferocity of the others. Whilst Bouckmann and Biassou invented a thousand methods of death for such prisoners who fell into their hands, Bug-Jargal was always ready to supply them with the means of quitting the island. The former contracted with the markets, with the Spanish rascals, who cruised about the coasts,

and sold to them, in advance, the booty of the unfortunate ones, whom they forced to leave. M. Colas de Maigne, and eight other distinguished colonists, were by his orders released from the wheel where Bouckmann had tried them. Bug-Jargal swept away these corsairs, and other traits of his generosity were cited, which would take too long to repeat.

My hoped-for vengeance did not appear to be near at hand. I could hear nothing of Pierrot. The insurgents commanded by Biassou continued to trouble Cap. They had once dared to approach the hill that commanded the town, and had only been dislodged by the battery from the citadel being directed upon them. The governor determined to drive them into the interior of the island. The militia of Acul, of Limbé, of Ouanaminte, and of Maribarou, joined with the regiment of Cap, and the formidable Red and Yellow companies, formed our active army. The militia of Dondon and Quartier-Dauphin, reënforced by a corps of volunteers, under the command of the merchant Poncignon, composed the garrison of the town.

The governor desired first to free himself from Bug-Jargal, whose incursions alarmed him. He sent against him the militia of Ouanaminte, and a battalion from Cap. This

corps returned two days afterwards, completely beaten. The governor determined to vanquish Bug-Jargal, he divided the same corps with a reënforcement of fifty yellow dragoons and four hundred of the militia of Maribarou. This second expedition was still more abused than the first. Thaddeus, who had taken part in it, was in a violent fury, and upon his return vowed vengeance against the rebel chief Bug-Jargal.

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Tears glistened in d'Auverney's eyes; he crossed his arms on his breast, and appeared to be for a few moments plunged in a melancholy reverie; at length he continued :

XXI.

The news had reached us that Bug-Jargal had left Morne-Rouge, and was moving his troops through the mountains to join Biassou. The governor jumped with joy. "We have them!" cried he, rubbing his hands. The next day the colonial forces were a league from Cap. The insurgents at our approach hastily abandoned Port-Margot and Fort Galifet, where they had established a post defended by large guns captured in one of the batteries on the coast. The governor was triumphant. We continued our march. Each one of us, passing through the arid and desolated plains cast sad looks at the place where his fields, his habitation, his riches had been : often he could not recognize it.

Sometimes our march was interrupted by the conflagration having spread from the lands under cultivation, to the forest and savanna. In these regions, where the land is untilled and the vegetation abundant, the burning of a forest is accompanied with many strange phenomena. One hears in the distance, often before seeing it, a sound like the

rush of a diluvian cataract. The trunks of the trees which break the branches crackle, the roots crack beneath the soil, the tall grass trembles, the lakes and marshes in the forests boil, the hissing of the flames consumes the air, causing a dull sound, sometimes increasing and sometimes diminishing in intensity as the conflagration sweeps on or recedes. Occasionally a glimpse can be caught of a clump of green trees surrounded by a belt of fire, but as yet untouched by the flames. Suddenly, a tongue of fire curls round the stems, and in another instant the whole becomes one mass of golden-colored fire. All burns in time; then a canopy of smoke sinks from time to time under a puff of wind and envelops the flame. It spreads itself out and diminishes, rises and falls, disperses, and thickens, suddenly becomes black; then a sort of fringe of fire quickly cuts the border, a terrible sound is heard, the sparks disappear, and the smoke ascends, disappearing at last in a mass of red ashes, which sink down slowly upon the ground.

XXII

The evening of the third day we entered the ravines of Grande-Riviere ; we calculated that the negro army was some twenty leagues off in the mountains.

We pitched our camp on a low hill, which appears to have served them the same purpose from the manner in which they had dismantled it. This position was not judicious : it is true that we were undisturbed. The hill was commanded on all sides by perpendicular rocks covered with thick forests. The steepness of this cliff had given to this place the name of the *Dompte-Mulatre*. The Grande-Riviere flowed behind our camp : confined between steep banks it was in this place narrow and deep. The steeply inclined banks bristled with clumps of bushes through which nothing could be seen. The waters of the stream itself were frequently concealed by garlands of lianas, which crossed to the maple branches, to red flowers sown among the bushes, mingling the shoots of one bank with the other and recrossing in a thousand ways, forming on the stream a network of verdure. From

the heights of the adjacent hills they appeared like meadows still fresh with dew. A dull sound, or sometimes a wild teal suddenly plunged through the flower-decked curtain, alone showing the course of the river.

The sun soon ceased to gild the crested peaks of the distant mountains of Dondon; little by little darkness spread over the camp, and the silence was only broken by the cry of the crane or by the measured tread of the sentinels.

Suddenly the dreaded war-song of "*Oua-Nassé*" and of "*Camp du Grand-Pré*" were heard above our heads; the palms, the acomas, and the cedars, which crowned the rocks, burst into flames, and the lurid light of the conflagration showed us on the neighboring hills, numerous bands of negroes and mulattoes, whose copper-hued skins glowed red in the firelight. It was the army of Biassou.

The danger was imminent. The officers, aroused from their sleep, endeavored to rally their soldiers. The drum beat to arms the "General Assembly," the bugles sounded the "Alarm." Our lines we formed in confusion, and the insurgents, instead of taking advantage of our disorder, remained motionless, gazing upon us, and singing "*Oua-Nassé*."

A gigantic negro appeared alone on one of the most elevated peaks that overhung the

Grande-Riviere, a flame-colored plume floated on his head ; an axe was in his right hand, a red flag in his left ; I recognized Pierrot. Had a carbine been within my reach my rage would have, perhaps, made me commit a cowardly act. The negro repeated the chorus of "*Oua-Nassé*," planted his flag on the peak, hurled his axe into the midst of our ranks, and plunged into the stream. A feeling of regret arose within me for I hoped to have slain him with my own hand.

Then the negroes began to hurl huge masses of rocks upon us ; a shower of bullets and arrows fell on the hill. Our soldiers, maddened at being unable to reach their adversaries, died in despair, crushed by the rocks, riddled with bullets, or pierced by arrows. Terrible confusion reigned in the army. Suddenly a terrible noise came from the middle of the Grande-Rivière. An extraordinary scene presented itself there. The Yellow Dragoons, who had suffered most from the shower of rocks that the insurgents had pushed over the mountains, had conceived the idea of taking refuge to escape under the thick roof of creepers which grew over the river. Thaddeus was the first to discover this very ingenious place

Here the narrative was suddenly interrupted.

XXIII.

More than a quarter of an hour had elapsed since Thaddeus, his right arm in a sling, had glided without being seen by any one, into the corner of the tent, where his gestures had alone expressed the interest that he took in his captain's narrative ; just at this moment when thinking that respect would not permit such an eulogy without some acknowledgment to d'Auverney, he stammered in a confused tone :

"You are too good, captain."

A general burst of laughter arose. D'Auverney, turning, said in a severe tone :

"What ! you here, Thaddeus?—and your arm?"

At this language, so new for him, the features of the old soldier grew dark ; he quivered, and threw back his head, as though to restrain the tears which seemed to struggle to his eyes.

"I never thought," said he, in a low voice, "I never could have thought that captain could offend his old servant by saying *you* to him."

The captain rose abruptly.





"Pardon, my old friend, pardon, I hardly knew what I said: hold, Thad, thou wilt pardon me?"

Tears sprang to the sergeant's eyes in spite of himself.

"It is the third time," remarked he—"but these are tears of joy."

Peace was made. A short silence ensued.

"But tell me, Thaddeus," asked d'Auverney, gently, "why hast thou quitted the hospital to come here?"

"It was—with your permission, captain—to ask if I should put the laced saddle-cloth on your charger for to-morrow."

Henri laughed.

"Thou wouldst have been wiser, Thaddeus, to have asked the surgeon-major if thou shouldst put two ounces of lint on thy sore arm."

"Or to ask," continued Paschal, "if you might take a little of wine to refresh yourself; at any rate, here is some brandy, which will do you good; taste it—my brave sergeant."

Thaddeus advanced, saluted, and, apologizing for taking the glass with his left hand, emptied it to the health of the assembled company. He was cheered.

"You had got, captain, to the moment when—oh, yes, it was I who proposed to take shelter under the creepers, to prevent us Christians from being killed by the rocks.

Our officer, who did not know how to swim, was afraid of being drowned, and, as was natural, was opposed to all his forces, until he saw—with your permission, gentlemen—a great rock fall on the creepers without being able to get through them. ‘It is better,’ said he, ‘to die like Pharaoh in Egypt than like Saint Stephen. We are not saints, and Pharaoh was a soldier like ourselves.’ My officer, a learned man, you see, agreed to my proposal, on the condition that I should first try the experiment myself. I went. I slid down the bank. I jumped under the cradle of branches above, and, zounds! captain, I seemed to be caught by the leg. I struggled, I shouted for help, I received half a dozen sabre cuts, and there were all the dragoons who were like the devils precipitating themselves pell-mell under the creepers. It was the blacks of Morne-Rouge who had hidden themselves there, never for a moment thinking that we should fall right on their backs, as a sack too much charged. That would not have been a good time for fishing! We fought, we swore, we shouted. Being naked, they were more alert than we; but our blows told better than theirs. We swam with one arm and fought with the other, as always practised in like cases. Those who did not know how to swim, say, like my captain.

hung on to the creepers with one hand, and the negroes pulled them by the legs. In the midst of the hullabaloo, I saw a big negro who defended himself like Beelzebub against eight or ten of my comrades; I swam there and I recognized Pierrot, otherwise called Bug . . . but that ought not to be told until afterwards, ought it, captain? I recognized Pierrot. Since the capture of the fort, we were on bad terms; I seized him by the throat; he was going to give me a thrust of his dagger, when he recognized me, and gave himself up instead of killing me; this was very unfortunate, captain, for if he had not surrendered . . . But that will be known later. When the blacks saw him taken, they made a rush at us to give him up; so effective was it that the militia was on the point of entering the water to help us, when Pierrot, seeing, without doubt, that all the negroes would be massacred, said some words which were truly gibberish, then they all took to flight. They plunged into the water and disappeared in a moment. This battle in the water would have been pleasant and very amusing, if I had not lost a finger and wet ten cartridges, and if . . . poor man! but that was to be, captain."

And the sergeant, after having respectfully placed the back of his left hand to

his forage cap, raised it to heaven with an inspired air.

D'Auverney seemed violently agitated.

"Yes," cried he, "thou art right, my old Thaddeus; that was a fatal night."

He would have fallen into one of his usual reveries had the assemblage not urgently pressed him to conclude his story. He continued.

XXIV.

Whilst the scene that Thaddeus had described (Thaddeus, triumphant, placed himself behind the captain), was passing behind the mountain, I had succeeded with some of my men in climbing, by aid of the brushwood, on a peak called Peacock Peak, from the brilliant tints of the mica which coated the surface of the rock. This peak was level with the negroes. The road was soon covered with the militia ; so we commenced a lively fire. The negroes, not so well armed as we were, could not reply as warmly ; they began to grow discouraged ; we redoubled our efforts, and our enemies soon evacuated the neighboring rocks, first hurling the dead bodies of their comrades upon our army, the greater proportion of which was still drawn up on the hill. Then we cut down and bound together with the leaves and fibres of the palms, several enormous cotton trees, of which the first inhabitants of the island made canoes for one hundred rowers. By the aid of this improvised bridge, we crossed over to the abandoned

peaks, and a part of the army thus found themselves advantageously posted. This operation completely quenched the courage of the rebels. Our fire continued. Lamentable shouts, to which were mingled the name of Bug-Jargal, suddenly resounded in the army of Biassou. Great fear manifested itself. Many negroes of the army of Morne-Rouge appeared on the rock upon which the blood-red banner still floated ; they prostrated themselves before it, tore it from its resting-place, and then precipitated it and themselves into the depths of the Grande-Riviere. This seemed to signify that their chief was either killed or a prisoner.

Our confidence had now risen to such a pitch that I resolved to drive the rebels from the rocks they still occupied. I caused a bridge of trees to be thrown between our peak and the nearest rock ; and I was the first to dash into the midst of the negroes. The soldiers were about to follow when one of the rebels with a blow of his axe broke the bridge to atoms. The ruins fell into the abyss and fell on the rocks with a terrible noise.

I turned my head ; in a moment I seemed to be seized by six or seven negroes, who disarmed me. I struggled like a lion ; they bound me with cords made of bark, heedless of the bullets that my soldiers poured upon them.

My despair was somewhat soothed by the cries of victory which I heard around me a moment later; I soon saw the negroes and mulattoes ascending the steep sides of the rocks with all the precipitation of fear, uttering cries of terror. My captors followed their example. The strongest amongst them placed me on his shoulders, and carried me in the direction of the forest, leaping from rock to rock with the agility of a chamois. The flames soon ceased to guide him; the pale rays of the moon was sufficient; he walked less rapidly now.

XXV.

After passing through the thickets, and leaping over the streams, we arrived in a valley situated in the higher part of the hills, of a singularly wild and savage appearance. This spot was absolutely unknown to me.

This valley was situated in the heart of the hills, called in Santo Domingo the *Double Mountains*. It was a large green plain, imprisoned by walls of bare rocks, and dotted with clumps of pines, indian wood, and palm-trees. The extreme cold which reigned almost continually in this part of the island, although it never freezes, was still increased by the freshness of the night, which was scarcely finished. The day was commencing to break and showed the whiteness of the surrounding summits, and the valley, still plunged in darkness, was only lighted by flashes from the negroes' fires; for this spot was their headquarters. The shattered remains of their army had begun to reassemble. Every now and then bands of negroes and mulattoes arrived, uttering groans of distress and cries of rage. New fires were speedily lighted, and the camp began to increase in size.





The negro whose prisoner I was had placed me at the foot of an oak, whence I surveyed this strange spectacle with entire carelessness. The black had bound me with his belt to the trunk of the tree, against which I was leaning, and carefully tightening the knots in the cords which impeded my movements, he placed on my head his own red woolen cap, as if to indicate that I was his property, and after making sure that I could not escape or be carried off by others, he prepared to leave me. I determined to address him, and I asked him in the Creole dialect if he belonged to the band of Dondon, or of Morne-Rouge. He stopped at once, and in a tone of pride replied, "Morne-Rouge!" An idea came to me. I had often heard of the generosity of the chief Bug-Jargal, and though I had made up my mind that death would soon end all my troubles, yet the thought of the tortures that would inevitably precede it should I fall into the hands of Biassou, filled me with horror. I wanted to ask to be put to death without these tortures. It was perhaps a weakness, but I believe at such a time a man's nature revolts at such a death. I thought then, that if I could be taken from Biassou, I might obtain from Bug-Jargal a death without supplication, a soldier's death. I therefore asked the Morne-Rouge negro to lead me to

his chief, Bug-Jargal. He started. "Bug-Jargal!" he repeated, striking on his forehead in anguish; then, as if rage had suddenly overtaken him, he cried, shaking his fist, "Biassou! Biassou!" After this menacing name he left me.

The mingled rage and grief of the negro recalled to my mind the events of the day, and the certainty we had acquired of either the death or capture of the chief of the band of Morne-Rouge. I felt that all hope was over, and resigned myself to the threatened vengeance of Biassou.





XXVI.

Meanwhile darkness still covered the valley where the crowd of blacks and the number of fires increased without ceasing. A group of negresses came near me to light a fire. By the numerous bracelets of blue, red, and violet glass which ornamented their arms and ankles, by the rings which weighed down their ears and adorned their toes and fingers, by the amulets on their bosoms and the collar of charms suspended round their necks, and by the aprons of variegated feathers, sole covering of their nudity, and above all, by their outcry, their vague and haggard look, I recognized them as *griotes*. You are perhaps ignorant that there exists amongst the African blacks, a class with a rude talent for poetry and improvisation which approaches closely to madness. These negroes, wandering from one kingdom to another, are in these barbarian countries looked upon as the ancient rhapsodists, and in the modern age the same as the minstrels of England, the *minnesingers* of Germany, and the troubadours of France. They are called *griots*. Their wives the

griotes, possessed like them with an insane genius, accompany the barbaric songs of their husbands with lascivious dances, and form a grotesque parody on the *nautch* girls of India and the *almées* of Egypt. It was some of these women who came and sat in a circle, a few feet from me, their legs crossed under them according to the African custom, and their hideous faces lighted up by the red light of a fire of withered branches.

When they had formed a complete circle they all took hands, and the eldest, who had a heron's plume stuck in her hair, began to exclaim "*Ouanga !*" I at once understood that they were going through one of their performances of witchcraft which they designate under that name. They all repeated: *Ouanga !* The eldest, after a moment's silence, pulled out a handful of her hair and threw it into the fire, crying out these sacramental words: "*Malé o quiab !*" which in the jargon of the Creoles means, "I shall go to the devil." All the *griotes* imitated their leader, and throwing locks of their hair into the fire, repeated gravely, "*Malé o quiab !*"

This strange innovation, and the extraordinary grimaces that accompanied it, caused me to burst into one of those hysterical fits of laughter which often seize the most serious man or one who is deeply grieved, and is

called hysterical laughter. It was in vain that I endeavored to restrain it; it would have vent. This laugh which escaped from so sad a heart, brought about a gloomy and terrifying scene.

Disturbed in their incantations, all the negresses arose as one is startled from sleep. They had not noticed me until then. They rushed tumultuously toward me, screaming: "*Blanco ! Blanco !*" I have never seen so hideous a collection of faces as these were in their passion, with their white teeth, and their eyes almost starting from their heads.

They were about to tear me to pieces. The old woman with the heron's plume made a sign, and exclaimed several times: "*Zoté cordé ! Zoté cordé !*" (Do you agree?) The wretched creatures stopped at once, and I saw them, not without surprise, tear off their feather aprons, throw them upon the ground, and commence the lascivious dance which the negroes call *La chica*.

This dance, which should consist only of attitudes and movements expressive of joy and pleasure, assumed here a different complexion of a sinister character. The dreadful looks which the *griotes* cast upon me in the midst of their playful evolutions, the lugubrious accent which they gave to the joyous air of *La chica*, the sharp and prolonged moan which the

venerable president of the black Sanhedrim gave from time to time to her *balafó*, a sort of spinnet, which sounds like a little organ, and is composed of twenty wooden pipes, gradually diminishing in size, and, above all, the horrible laugh with which each of the naked sorceresses, in certain pauses of the dance, thrusting her face close to mine, greeted me in turn, showed only too clearly the horrible punishment that awaited the *blanco* (white man) who had profaned the mysteries of their *Ouanga*. I recollected that savage nations had a custom of dancing round the victims that they were about to sacrifice, and I patiently awaited the conclusion of the performance which I knew would be sealed with my blood. However, I could not repress a shudder when I saw at a moment indicated by the *balafó*, each *griote* thrust into the fire the point of a sabre, or the blade of an axe, a long sail-maker's needle, a pair of pincers, or the teeth of a saw.

The dance was approaching its conclusion ; the instruments of torture were red. At a signal from the old woman, the negresses marched in line, one after the other, to look for some horrible implement in the fire.

Those who had none furnished themselves with a blazing stick. Then I understood

clearly what my punishment was to be, and that I should find an executioner in each dancer. At another command from their leader they commenced the last figure, wailing in a frightful manner. I closed my eyes that I might not see the frantic evolutions of these female demons, who panting from fatigue and rage, clashed the red-hot weapons over their heads in measured cadence, from which came a sharp noise and myriads of sparks. I waited, nerving myself for the moment when I should feel my flesh quiver in agony, my bones calcine, and my muscles writhe under the burning tortures of the nippers and the saws, and a shiver ran through my body. It was a frightful moment.

Fortunately it did not last long. The *griotes* reached the end of *La chica*, when in the distance I heard the voice of the negro who had made me prisoner. He was running and shouting: "*Que haceis, mujeres, de demonio? Que haceis alli? Dexaís mi prisionero!*" (What are you doing, woman of the devil? What are you doing there? Leave my prisoner alone!) I opened my eyes again. It was already broad daylight. The negro hurried with a thousand angry gestures. The *griotes* paused, but they seemed less influenced by the threats of my captor than by the presence of a strange-looking

person by whom the negro was accompanied.

It was a very stout and very short man—a species of dwarf—whose face was entirely concealed by a white veil, pierced with three holes, for the eyes and mouth, after the manner of the penitents. This veil, which fell on his neck and shoulders, left naked his hairy breast, which appeared to me to be the same color as that of a half-caste, and upon which hung a golden chain bearing the sun of a mutilated silver monstrance. One could see the cross-hilt of a heavy dagger peep from his scarlet belt, which also supported a kind of petticoat striped with green, yellow, and black, the hem of which hung down to his large and ill-shaped feet. His arms were bare like his breast, a white staff, a rosary of adrezarach, of which the beads were suspended from his belt, close to the dagger, and his head was surmounted by a cap adorned with bells, in which, when he approached, I was not surprised in recognizing the *gorra* of Habibrah. Amongst the hieroglyphics with which it was covered, one could see many spots of gore. It was, without doubt, the blood of the faithful fool. These traces of murder gave me fresh proofs of his death, and awakened in my heart a feeling of regret.

Directly the *griotes* recognized the wearer of Habibrah's cap, they cried out all at once, "*The Obi!*" and prostrated themselves. I guessed at once that this was a sorcerer attached to Biassou's force. "*Basta! basta!*" ("That's enough! That's enough!") said he, with a grave and solemn voice, coming close to them. "*Dexaïs el prisionero de Biassou.*" ("Leave Biassou's prisoner.") All the negresses leaped to their feet throwing their implements of torture on one side, put on their feather aprons, and, at a gesture from the Obi, they fled like a cloud of grasshoppers.

At this instant the glance of the Obi fell upon me; he started back a pace, and half waved his white staff in the direction of the retiring *griotes*, as if he wished to recall them. However, after having muttered between his teeth the word "*Maldicho*" ("accursed"), and said some words in the ear of the negro, he crossed his arms and retired slowly, apparently buried in deep thought.

XXVII.

My captor informed me that Biassou had asked to see me, and that in an hour I must prepare to have an interview with this chief.

It was, nevertheless, another hour of life. Waiting for the time to elapse, my glances wandered over the rebel camp, the singular appearance of which the daylight permitted me to observe. Had I been in any other position, I should have laughed heartily at the ostentatious vanity of the negroes, who were nearly all decked out in fragments of clerical and military dress, the spoils of their victims. The greater portion of these ornaments were only torn and blood-stained rags. It was not strange to see a gorget shining under a band, or an epaulet on a chasuble. Without doubt, to rest from the work to which they had been condemned all their lives, the negroes remained in a state of inaction unknown to our soldiers, who had retired under their tents. Some of them slept exposed to the rays of the sun, their heads

close to a burning fire ; others, with eyes that were sometimes dull and furious, chanting a monotonous air, sat at the doors of their *ajoupas*—a species of hut covered with palm or banana leaves, of which the conical shape resembled our artillery tents. Their black or copper-colored wives, aided by the negro children, prepared the food for the fighting-men. I could see them stirring with forks, iguanas, bananas, yams, peas, cocoa and maize, Caribbean cabbage, which they call *tayo*, and other vegetables indigenous to the country, which they cooked with joints of pork, turtle and dog in the great boilers stolen from the dwellings of the planters. In the distance, on the outskirts of the camp, the *griots* and *griotes* formed large circles round the fires, and the wind brought to my ears fragments of their barbaric songs, mingled with notes from their tambourines and guitars. Some videttes placed on the summit of neighboring rocks on the high ground watched over the headquarters of General Biassou ; the only defense of which in case of an attack was a circle of wagons filled with plunder and ammunition. These black sentries posted on the summits of the granite pyramids, with which the mountains bristled, turned about like the weather-cocks in Gothic spires, and with all the strength of their lungs shouted one to the other, the

cry which showed the security of their camp :
“*Nada ! nada !*” (“Nothing ! nothing !”)

From time to time groups of curious negroes collected round me. All looked upon me with a threatening expression.





XXVIII.

At length an escort of negro soldiers very fairly equipped arrived. The negro whose property I appeared to be, unfastened me from the oak to which I was bound, and handed me over to the chief of the squad, receiving in exchange a large bag which he opened upon the spot. It was full of piastres. As he knelt upon the grass slowly counting them the soldiers led me away. I examined their equipments with curiosity. They wore a uniform of coarse cloth, reddish-brown and yellow, cut after the Spanish style. A sort of Castilian *montera*, ornamented with a large red cockade (the Spanish), hid their woolly hair. Instead of a cartridge-box, they had a species of game-bag slung at their sides. Their arms were a heavy musket, a sabre, and a dagger. I afterwards learned that these men formed the special body-guard of Biassou.

After a circuitous route through the rows of *ajoupas*, which were scattered all over the camp, we came to a cave which nature had hollowed out in one of those masses of rock by which the meadow was surrounded. A large

curtain of some material from the looms of Thibet, which the negroes called *katchmir*, and which is remarkable less for the brilliancy of its coloring than for the softness of its material and its variegated designs, concealed the interior of the cavern from the vulgar gaze. The entrance was guarded by a double line of negroes, dressed like those who had escorted me hither.

After the countersign had been exchanged with the sentries who marched backwards and forwards before the cave, the commander of the escort raised the *katchmir* curtain, announced me, and then let it drop behind me.

A copper lamp with five lights hung by a chain from the roof, casting a flickering light upon the damp walls of this cave into which daylight never entered. Between the ranks of mulatto soldiers I perceived a colored man sitting upon a large block of mahogany, which was partially covered with a carpet made of parrots' feathers. This man belonged to the *Sacatras* tribe, which is only distinguished from the negroes in a small degree often imperceptible. His dress was ridiculous. A splendid silk girdle, from which hung a cross of Saint Louis, held up a pair of blue trousers of coarse cloth, whilst a waistcoat of white linen, too short to reach to the girdle, completed his costume. He wore high boots, a

round hat with a red cockade, and epaulets, one of gold with silver stars like those worn by brigadiers, whilst the other was of a yellow worsted. Two copper stars, which seemed to have been taken from a pair of spurs, had been fixed upon it, evidently to render it more worthy of its resplendent companion. These epaulets were only kept in place by transverse cords, hanging from either side of the chief's breast. A sabre and a pair of richly chased pistols lay on the feather carpet by his side.

Behind the throne, silent and immovable, were two children dressed in the costume of slaves, bearing large fans of peacock feathers. These two young slaves were white.

Two squares of crimson velvet, which seemed to have belonged to some church pew, marked two places to the right and left of the mahogany block. One of these places, that on the right, was occupied by the Obi, who had rescued me from the frenzy of the *griotes*. He was seated, his legs crossed under him, holding in his right hand his wand, immovable as a porcelain idol in a Chinese pagoda. However, through the holes in his veil, I could see his flashing eyes fixed steadfastly on me.

Upon each side of the general were trophies of flags, banners, and pennons of all kinds, among them I noticed the white flag with the

fleur de lis, the tricolor flag and the flag of Spain. The others were covered with fancy devices. I also perceived a large standard entirely black.

At the end of the grotto, above the chief's head, another object arrested my attention. It was the portrait of the mulatto Ogé, who had been broken on the wheel the year previous at Cap, for the crime of rebellion, with his lieutenant Jean-Baptiste Chavanne, and twenty other blacks or mulattoes. In this painting, Ogé, the son of a butcher at Cap, was represented as he had dressed to sit for his picture, in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel, with the cross of Saint Louis, and the Order of Merit of the Lion, which he had purchased from the Prince of Limburg, upon his breast.

The negro general into whose presence I had been introduced was of medium figure. His ignoble face showed a strange mixture of cunning and cruelty. He made me approach and looked at me for some time in silence; at last he sneered like a hyena.

"I am Biassou," said he.

I listened for the name, but I could not hear it from his mouth in the midst of this ferocious laugh, without an inward trembling. My face remained calm and proud. I made no reply.

“Well!” continued he, in very bad French, “have they already impaled you, that you are unable to bend your spine before Jean Biassou, generalissimo of this conquered land, and brigadier of the armies of *su magestad catolica*?” (His Most Catholic Majesty.) [The tactics of the rebel chiefs were to make believe they were sometimes for the King of France, sometimes for the Revolution and sometimes for the King of Spain.]

I crossed my arms upon my chest, and looked him firmly in the face. He again sneered. This seemed to be a habit with him.

“Oh! ho! *me pareces hombre de buen corazon* (you seem to me a courageous man); listen to what I am going to say. Are you a Creole?”

“No,” I replied, “I am French.”

My assurance made him smile. He continued, sneering:

“So much the better! I see by your uniform that you are an officer. How old are you?”

“Twenty.”

“When were you twenty?”

To this question, which aroused in me all the recollection of my misery, I remained absorbed in my thoughts a moment. He repeated it imperiously. I replied:

“The day upon which your friend Léogri was hung.”

Anger contracted his face; his sneer was prolonged. He continued however.

"It is twenty-three days since Léogri was executed," said he. "Frenchman, when you meet him this evening, you may tell him from me that you lived twenty-four days longer than he did. I will spare you for to-day; I wish you to tell him of the liberty that his brethren have gained, and what you have seen at the headquarters of General Jean Biassou, brigadier, and what is the authority of this generalissimo over the *subjects of the king*."

It was under this title that Jean-François, who called himself *Grand Admiral of France*, and his comrade Biassou designated their hordes of rebel negroes and mulattoes.

Then he ordered me to sit down in one corner between two of his guards, and, motioning with his hand to some of his men, wearing the uniform of aides-de-camp, said:

"Let the drums be sounded, that all the army may assemble around your general, to pass in review. And you, your reverence," he added, turning to the Obi, "put on your priestly vestments, and perform for our army the holy sacrament of the mass."

The Obi rose, bowed profoundly before Biassou, and whispered some words to which the chief interrupted in a loud voice.

“Do you say you have no altar, *señor cura!* is that astonishing in these mountains? but never mind, since the *bon Giu* (good Lord) has no need of a magnificent temple for His worship, or an altar ornamented with gold lace. Gideon and Joshua adored Him before masses of rock; let us do as they did, *bon per* (good Father), all that is required is that the hearts should be true. You have no altar! Ah, well, could you not make one of that great chest of sugar which we took day before yesterday from Dubussion’s house?”

This suggestion of Biassou was promptly carried into execution. In an instant the interior of the cave was arranged for a burlesque of the divine ceremony. A tabernacle and pyx stolen from the parish church of Acul (the very church in which my nuptials with Marie had received Heaven’s blessing so soon followed by misfortune), were promptly produced, and the stolen chest of sugar was speedily made into an altar and covered with a white cloth, through which, however, these words could be plainly perceived: *Dubussion et Cie, pour Nantes.*

When the sacred vessels had been placed on the cloth, the Obi perceived that the crucifix was wanting. He drew his cross-handle dagger, and placed it between the communion cup and the monstrance, in

front of the tabernacle. Then without removing his cap or veil, he threw the cape which had been stolen from the priest of Acul, over his shoulders and bare chest, opened the missal with its silver clasps from which the prayers had been read on my ill-fated marriage day, and, turning towards Biassou, whose seat was a few paces from the altar, announced to him, with a profound bow, that all was ready.

On a sign from the general the *katchmir* curtains were drawn aside, and the insurgent army was seen drawn up in close column before the entrance to the grotto. Biassou removed his round hat and knelt before the altar. "On your knees!" he cried, in a loud voice. "On your knees!" repeated the commander of each battalion. The beating of drums was heard. All the insurgents fell upon their knees.

I alone refused to move, disgusted at this vile profanation about to be enacted under my very eyes; but the two powerful mulattoes who guarded me pulled my seat from under me, and pressed heavily upon my shoulders so that I fell on my knees, like the others, compelled to pay a semblance of respect to this parody of a religious ceremony.

The Obi performed his duties with affected solemnity, whilst Biassou's two white pages officiated as deacon and sub-deacon.

The insurgents, prostrated before the altar, assisted at the ceremony with the greatest enthusiasm, the general setting the example. At the moment of the exaltation of the host, the Obi, raising in his hands the consecrated vessel, exclaimed in his Creole jargon: "*Zoté conè bon Giu; ce li mo fè zotè voer. Blan touyé li, touyé blan yo toute!*" ("You see your good God; I am showing Him to you. The white men killed Him! kill all the whites!") Because Toussaint-Louverture had been in the habit of so addressing the negroes in that manner after having communion.) At these words, pronounced in a loud voice, the tones of which had something in them familiar to my ear, all the rebels uttered a loud shout; they clashed their weapons together. Had it not been for Biassou's influence that hour would have been my last. I understand to what excess of courage and activity men could be driven who used the dagger for a cross, and upon whose mind the most trivial event makes a deep and profound impression.

XXIX.

At the termination of the ceremony the Obi bowed respectfully to Biassou, then the general rose, and, addressing me in French, said :

“ We are accused of having no religion, you see it is a falsehood, and that we are good Catholics.”

I do not know whether he spoke ironically or in good faith. A few moments after he called for a glass bowl filled with grains of black maize ; then on the top he threw some white maize, raising the glass above his head so that it could be better seen in the army, he said :

“ Brothers, you are the black maize ; the whites your enemies are the white maize !”

With these words, he shook the bowl, and when nearly all the white grains had disappeared beneath the black, he exclaimed with an air of inspiration and triumph : “ *Gnette blan si la la !*” (See where the whites are now !)

Another shout re-echoed throughout the mountains at this illustration of the general ;

Biassou continued his harangue, mixing his bad French, Creole dialect, and Spanish.

“*El tiempo de la mansuetud es pasado* (The time for gentleness has passed). We have been for a long time as patient as the sheep to whose wool the whites compare our hair; let us now be as implacable as the panthers or the tigers of the countries from which they have torn us. Force alone can obtain for us our rights; everything belongs to those who use their force without pity. Saint Loup (wolf) has two days in the year consecrated to him in the Gregorian calendar, whilst the Paschal Lamb has but one! Is it not so, your reverence?”

The Obi bowed in sign of corroboration.

“They have come,” continued Biassou, “these enemies of ours have come as enemies of the regeneration of humanity, these whites, these planters, these men of business, *verdaderos demonios* (veritable devils) vomited from the mouth of Alecto! *Son venidos con insolencia* (they came insolently); they were clothed in their finery, their uniforms, their feathers, their magnificent arms, and they despised us because we were black and naked; they thought in their pride that they could drive us before them as easily as these peacocks’ feathers disperse the swarms of sandflies and mosquitoes.”

In making this comparison, he snatched from the hands of his white slaves one of the large fans, and waved it over his head with a thousand eccentric gesticulations. He continued :

“ But, my brethren, our army burst upon them like flies upon a carcass ; they have fallen in their fine uniforms beneath the strokes of our naked arms, which they believed to be without power, ignorant that good wood is the stronger when the bark is stripped off. They tremble now, these accursed tyrants ! *Yo gagné peur !* ” (They are afraid !)

A triumphant yell rose in answer to the general's speech, and all the army repeated, “ *Yo gagné peur !* ”

“ Blacks, Creoles, and Congos,” added Biassou, “ vengeance and liberty ! Mulattoes, do not be led away by the temptations *de los diabolos blancos* (of the diabolical whites). Your fathers serve in their ranks, but your mothers are with us. Besides, *O hermanos de mi alma* (O brethren of my soul), have they ever acted as fathers to you ? Have they not rather been masters whilst you were always slaves like the blacks ? Whilst a miserable cotton garment covered your bodies scorched by the sun, your cruel fathers went about in *buenos sombreros* (good hats) and nankeen clothes on work days, and on holidays in cloth and

velvet *a diez y siete quartos la vara* (at twenty-seven quartos the vara—a Spanish measure which is equivalent to a yard). Curses be on their unnatural hearts. But as the holy commandments of *bon Giu* forbid you to strike your father, abstain from doing so. If you encounter him in the enemies' ranks what hinders you, *amigos*, from turning to your comrade and saying: '*Touyé papa moé, ma touyé quena toué?*' (Kill my father, I will kill yours.) Vengeance, then, my brethren, and liberty for all men. This cry has found an echo in every part of the island; it is part of *Quisqueya* (ancient name of Santo Domingo, which signifies high hand. The natives also call it *Aity*); it has roused Tobago and Cuba. It was Bouckmann, a negro from Jamaica, the leader of the twenty-five fugitive slaves of the Blue Mountain, who raised the standard of revolt amongst us. A glorious victory was the first proof that he gave of his brotherhood with the negroes of Santo Domingo. Let us follow his noble example, with an axe in one hand and a torch in the other. No mercy for the whites, or the planters: let us massacre their families, and destroy their plantations! Do not allow a tree to remain standing on their estates. Let us upturn the very earth itself, that it may swallow up our white oppressors! Courage

then, friends and brethren! we shall fight them and kill them. We will conquer or die. As victors, we shall enjoy all the pleasures of life, and if we fall, the saints are ready to receive us in heaven, where each warrior will receive a double ration of *aguardiente* (brandy) and a silver piastre each day!"

This warlike discourse, which to you appears perfectly ridiculous, gentlemen, had a tremendous effect on the insurgents. It is true that Biassou's wild gesticulations, the manner in which his voice rose and fell, and the strange sneer which accompanied his words, imparted to his speech a strange amount of power and fascination. The skill with which he alluded to those points which would have the greatest weight with the negroes, added a degree of force which told well with his audience.

I will not attempt to describe to you the outburst of determined enthusiasm which manifested itself in the insurgent army after Biassou's harangue. There arose at once a discordant chorus of howls, yells and shouts. Some beat their breasts, others clashed their clubs and sabres together. Many threw themselves on their knees, and remained in that position as though wrapt in ecstasy. The negresses tore their breasts and arms with the fish-bones which served as combs for their

hair. The sounds of drums, tomtoms, guitars and tambourines were mingled with the discharge of firearms. It was a veritable witches' Sabbath.

Biassou raised his hand, and, as if by enchantment, the tumult was stilled; each negro in silence returned to his place in the ranks. This discipline which Biassou had imposed upon his equals by the exercise of his power of will struck me, I may say, with admiration. All the soldiers of the force seemed to speak and move under the hand of their chief, as the notes of the harpsichord under the fingers of the musician.

XXX.

The spectacle of another example of the powers of fascination and deception now attracted my attention; this was the healing of the wounded. The Obi, who in the army performed the double functions of healer of souls and bodies, began his inspection of his patients. He had taken off his sacerdotal robes, and had brought before him a large box in which were his drugs and instruments. He used the chirurgical instruments very rarely, but occasionally drew blood skillfully enough with a lancet made of fish-bone, but he appeared to me very awkward in the management of the tongs which served him as nippers, and the knife which replaced the bistoury. In most cases he contented himself with prescribing orange-flower water, drinks of china-root, sarsaparilla, and a mouthful of old rum. His favorite remedy, and one which he said was infallible, was composed of three glasses of red wine in which was some grated nutmeg and the yolk of a hard-boiled egg. He employed this specific for almost every malady. You will

understand that his knowledge of medicine was as great a farce as his pretended religion, and it is probable that the small number of cures that he effected would not have secured the confidence of the negroes had he not had recourse to all sorts of mummeries and incantations, and acted as much upon their imaginations as well as upon their bodies. Thus, he contented himself by touching their wounds and performing some mysterious signs; other times he skillfully mingled together religion and negro superstition, and would put into their wounds a little *fetish* stone wrapped in a morsel of lint, and the patient would credit the stone with the healing effects of the lint. If any one came to announce to him the death of a patient he would answer solemnly: "I foresaw it; he was a traitor; in the burning of such and such a house he spared a white man's life; his death was a judgment." And the wondering crowd of rebels applauded more and more, incensed from his sentiments of hatred and vengeance. This charlatan, amongst other methods, employed one which amused me by its singularity. It was for one of the negro chiefs who had been badly wounded in the last action. He examined the wound a long time, dressed it as well as he was able, then, mounting the altar, exclaimed: "All this is nothing." He then

tore three or four leaves from the missal, burnt them in the torch stolen from the church at Acul, and, mingling the cinders with some wine in the sacramental cup, he said to the wounded man, "Drink ; this is the remedy." ⁸ The patient drank, stupidly fixing his eyes on the impostor, who had his hands raised over him as if to call down benedictions from heaven ; and it may be that the conviction that he was healed brought about his cure.

XXXI.

Another scene in which the veiled Obi was principal actor succeeded to this. The physician had taken the place of the priest, and the sorcerer now replaced the physician.

"*Hombres, escuchate !*" ("Men, listen !") cried the Obi, leaping with incredible agility upon the improvised altar, and sinking down with his legs crossed under his striped petticoat. "*Escuchate, hombres !* Let those who wish to read the book of fate approach ! I can foretell the future. *Hé estudiado la ciencia de los gitanos.*" (I have studied the science of the gipsies).

A crowd of mulattoes and negroes hurriedly crowded up to him.

"One at a time," said the Obi, in that low voice which called to my mind something that I could not quite recollect. "If you come all together, you will all enter the tomb together."

They stopped. Just then a colored man dressed in a white jacket and trousers, with a Madras head-dress, after the manner of the rich planters, came close to Biassou. Consternation was depicted on his countenance.

"Well," said the general, in a low voice, "what is it? What is the matter, Rigaud?"

It was the mulatto chief of the assemblage at Cayes, a man who concealed much cunning under an appearance of candor, and cruelty beneath the mask of gentleness. I examined him with attention.

"General," said Rigaud (and he spoke very low, but I was close to Biassou and could hear), "on the outskirts of the camp there is a messenger from Jean-François. Bouckmann has been killed in a battle with M. de Touzard; and the whites have his head as a trophy in their town."

"Is it only that?" asked Biassou, his eyes sparkling with delight at learning the diminution of the number of chiefs and the consequent increase of his own importance.

"The emissary of Jean-François has another message for you."

"That is all right," replied Biassou. "Abandon this air of alarm, my good Rigaud."

"But," said Rigaud, "do you not fear, general, the effect that the death of Bouckmann will have on your army?"

"You are not as simple as you appear, Rigaud," replied the chief, "but you shall see what Biassou will do. Keep the messenger back for a quarter of an hour."

Then he approached the Obi, who during this conversation, heard by me alone, had been exercising his functions as fortune-teller, questioning the wandering negroes, examining the lines on their hands and foreheads, and distributing more or less good luck according to the size and color of the piece of money thrown by each negro into a silver-gilt basin which stood at his feet. Biassou whispered a few words in his ear. The sorcerer without making any reply, continued his prophetic observations.

"The one," said he, "who has in the middle of his forehead, on the wrinkle of the sun, a little square or triangular figure, will make a large fortune without work or toil.

"The figure of three interlaced S's on the forehead is a fatal sign; he who has it will certainly be drowned if he does not carefully avoid water.

"Four lines from the top of the nose, and turning round two by two towards the eyes, announce that you will be taken prisoner, and for a long time remain a captive in the hands of a stranger."

Here the Obi paused.

"Friends," continued he, "I have observed this sign in the forehead of Bug-Jargal, the brave chief of Morne-Rouge."

These words, which convinced me that Bug-Jargal had been made prisoner, were followed by a cry of grief from a band of negroes who wore short scarlet breeches. They belonged to the band of Morne-Rouge.

Then the Obi began again :

“ If you have on the right side of the forehead in the line of the moon, some figure which resembles a fork, do not remain idle, and avoid dissipation of all kinds.

“ A small mark is important, the Arabic cipher 3 on the line of the sun betokens blows with a stick.”

An old Spanish negro here interrupted the magician, and he dragged himself begging him to dress his wound. He had been wounded in the face, and one of his eyes, almost torn from the socket, hung bleeding. The Obi had forgotten him when going through his patients. Directly he saw him he cried out :

“ Round marks on the right side of the forehead on the line of the moon foretell misfortunes to the eyes. *Hombre*” (man), said he to the miserable wounded man, “ this sign is very apparent on your forehead ; let me see your hand.”

“ Alas, *excelentísimo señor*” (excellent sir), answered the other, “ *mis'-usted mis ojo !*” (look at my eye !)

"*Fatras*" (veteran negro), replied the Obi, crossly, "I have little need to see your eye! Your hand, I say."

The miserable wretch gave his hand moaning, "*mi ojo!*" (my eye!)

"Good," said the Obi; "if you see on the line of life a spot surrounded by a circle you will become blind, because this figure announces the loss of an eye. There it is. There is the spot and the little circle. You will become blind."

"*Ya le soy*" (I am so already), answered the *fatras*, piteously.

But the Obi, who was no longer a physician, had thrust him roughly aside, and continuing without paying any heed to the poor blind man, cries:

"*Escuchate, hombres!* (Listen, men). If the seven lines on the forehead are slight, twisted, and lightly marked, they announce a short life.

"He who has between his eyebrows on the line of the moon the figure of two crossed arrows will be killed in battle.

"If the line of life which intersects the hand has a cross at its junction it foretells death on the scaffold.

"And here I must tell you, *hermanos*," said the Obi, interrupting himself, "that one of the bravest defenders of our liberties, Bouckmann, has these three fatal marks."

At these words all the negroes held their breath; their immovable eyes fixed on the impostor expressed that sort of attention which resembles stupor, with glances of stupid admiration.

"Only," continued the Obi, "I cannot reconcile the two opposing signs, death on the battle-field and also on the scaffold. However, my science is infallible."

He stopped and cast a meaning glance at Biassou. Biassou whispered something to one of his aides-de-camp, an officer, who at once quitted the cavern.

"A wrinkled and gaping mouth," continued the Obi, turning on his audience a malicious glance, "an insipid attitude and arms hanging, and the left hand turned out, without defining the motive, announce natural stupidity, emptiness, and want of reasoning powers."

Biassou gave a sneer of delight; at that moment the aide-de-camp returned, bringing with him a negro covered with mud and dust, whose feet, wounded by the roots and flints, showed that he had just come off a long journey. This was the messenger Rigaud had announced. He held in one hand a sealed package, and in the other a document with the design of a flaming heart. In the middle was a monogram, composed of the letters *M*

and *N* interlaced, no doubt intended as an emblem of the union of the free mulattoes and the negro slaves. At the side of this monogram I could read this motto: "*Prejudice conquered, the rod of iron broken, long live the king!*" This document was a safe conduct given by Jean-François.

The messenger presented it to Biassou, and, after bowing profoundly, handed him the sealed paper. The general hastily tore it open and perused the contents, and put it in the pocket of his vest, and crushing the other in his hands, cried in a sorrowful voice :

"People of the king!"

The negroes bowed respectfully.

"People of the king! this is a dispatch to Jean Biassou, generalissimo of the conquered states, Brigadier-General of His Catholic Majesty, from Jean-François, Grand Admiral of France, Lieutenant-General of the army of the King of Spain and the Indies.

"Bouckmann, chief of the hundred and twenty negroes of the Blue Mountain, of Jamaica, recognized independents by the Governor-General of Belle-Combe, Bouckmann has just fallen in the glorious struggle of liberty and humanity against tyranny and barbarism. This generous chief has been slain in an action with the white brigands of the infamous Touzard. The monsters have

cut off his head, and have announced their intention of exposing it on a scaffold in the main square of the town of Cap. Vengeance!"

A gloomy silence succeeded the reading of this dispatch; but the Obi leaped on his altar, and waving his white wand, exclaimed in accents of triumph:

"Solomon, Zorobabel, Eléazar Thaleb, Cardan, Judas Bowtharicht, Averroès, Albert the Great, Bohabdil, Jean de Hagen, Anna Baratio, Daniel Ogrumof, Rachel Flintz, Altornino, I give you thanks. The *ciencia* (science) of the prophets has not deceived me. *Hijos, amigos, hermanos, muchachos, mozos, madres, y vosotros todas qui me escuchais aqui* (sons, friends, brothers, boys, children, mothers, all of you listen to me), *que habia dicho!* (what I predicted!) The marks on the forehead of Bouckmann announced that his life would be a short one, that he would die in battle; the marks on his hand that he would appear on the scaffold. The revelations of my art have come true, and the events arranged themselves to be executed in a way in which we could not make them agree, the death on the field of battle, and the scaffold! Brethren, admire!"

The panic of the negroes changed during this discourse to a sort of admiring terror.

They listened to the Obi with confidence mingled with fear; whilst the latter, carried away by his own enthusiasm, walked up and down the sugar-cane, the surface of which offered enough space for his short steps. Biassou sneered.

He addressed the Obi.

"Your reverence, since you know what is to come, it would please us if you will read what is to become of our future, that of Jean Biassou, *mariscal de campo*."

The Obi standing on the top of his strange altar, which the credulity of the negroes looked upon as something divine, said to the *mariscal de campo*: "*Venga vuestra merced*" (Come, your Excellency). At this moment the Obi was the most important man in the army, the military power bowed to the spiritual. Biassou approached. I could see some anger in his eyes.

"Your hand, general," said the Obi, stooping to kiss it in order to grasp it. "*Empezo* (I begin). The *line of junction* equally marked in its full length, promises you riches and happiness; the *line of life*, long, and strongly developed, announces a life exempt from ills, and a happy old age; narrow it, shows your wisdom and your superior talents, the *generosidad* (generosity) of your heart; lastly, I see what *chiromancos*

(chiromancers) call the luckiest of all signs, a number of little wrinkles in the shape of a tree with its branches extending upwards; it promises wealth and grandeur. The *line of health*, very long, confirms the signs of the line of life; it indicates courage also; bending back towards the little finger, it forms a kind of hook. General, this is the sign of wholesome severity."

At this word the brilliant eyes of the little Obi glanced at me through the apertures of his veil, and I remarked at another time a well-known accent hidden under the habitual gravity of his voice. He continued with the same gestures and intonation:

"Marked with *the line of health*, small circles, announce that you will have to order a number of executions. It is divided toward the middle to form a half-circle, which shows that you will be exposed to great danger from ferocious beasts, that is to say, from the whites, if you do not exterminate them. The *line of fortune* surrounded, like the line of life, by little branches rising towards the upper part of the hand, confirms the position of power and supremacy to which you have been called; turning to the right and slender in the upper part, announces the talent of governing. The fifth line, that of the *triangle*, prolonged to the root of the middle

finger, promises you success in all your undertakings. Let me see your fingers. The thumb marked with little lines from the nail to the joint shows that you will receive a noble heritage; that of the glory of Bouckmann, no doubt," added the Obi, in a loud voice. "The slight swelling at the root of the forefinger is lightly marked with lines; honors and dignities! The middle finger shows nothing. Your little finger is covered with lines crossing each other, you will vanquish all your enemies, you will dominate over your rivals! These lines form the cross of Saint Andrew, a mark of genius and foresight. The joint which unites the little finger to the hand offers tortuous wrinkles; fortune will load you with favors. I also notice the figure of a circle, another token of your arrival at the highest power and dignity!

"'Happy the man,' says Eléazar Thaleb, 'who possesses all these signs! Destiny marks him with prosperity, and his fortunate star announces the talent which will bring him glory.' Now, general, let me look at your forehead. 'He,' says Rachel Flintz, the Bohemian, 'who bears on his forehead, on the line of the sun, a square or a triangular mark, will make a great fortune.' Here it is very pronounced. 'If the mark is on the right, it refers to an important succession.'

Always that of Bouckmann ! (The mark in the shape of a horseshoe between the eyebrows, under the line of the moon, means that prompt vengeance will be taken for an insult and tyranny.) I have this mark ; you have it also."

The curious manner in which the Obi uttered these words, "*I have this mark*," attracted my attention.

"We notice it," added he in the same tone, "with the brave men who meditate a revolt and break their servitude in a combat. The lion's claw which you have imprinted above your eyebrows shows undoubted courage. Finally, General Jean Biassou, your forehead shows every sign of success ; it is a combination of lines which form the letter *M*, the commencement of the name of the Virgin. In whatever part of the forehead, and in whatever line of the face, such a sign appears, the signification is the same—genius, glory and power. He who bears it will always bring success to whatever cause he embraces ; and those under his command will never have to regret any loss ; he alone is worth all the soldiers of his army. You, general, are elected by Fate."

"*Gracias* (thanks), your reverence," said Biassou, preparing to return to his mahogany throne.

"Stay a moment, general," said the Obi, "I forgot one last sign. The line of the sun, so strongly marked on your forehead, proves that you understand the way of the world, that you possess the wish to make others happy, that you have much liberality, and like to do things in a magnificent manner."

Biassou understood that forgetfulness comes to him more often than to the Obi. He drew from his pocket a heavy purse, and threw it into the silver plate, so as to prove that the *line of the sun* never lied.

Meanwhile, this miraculous horoscope of the general's had produced its effect upon the army. All the insurgents who, since the news of the death of Bouckmann, attached greater weight than ever to the words of the Obi, lost their feelings of uneasiness and became violently enthusiastic, and, trusting blindly in their infallible sorcerer and their predestined chief, began to shout, "*Long live our Obi! Long live Biassou!*" The Obi and Biassou glanced at each other, and I almost thought I could hear the stifled laugh of the Obi answer the sardonic chuckle of the general.

I do not know why this Obi tormented my thoughts; I had a feeling that I had seen or heard some one who resembled this strange being; I made up my mind to speak to him.

“Mr. Obi, *señor cura*, your reverence, *bon per!*” (good father!) cried I to him.

He turned sharply round.

“There is some one here whose lot you have not yet cast—it is mine.”

He crossed his arms over the silver sun that covered his hairy breast, but he made no reply. I continued:

“I would gladly know what you prophesy with regard to my future; but your worthy comrades have taken my watch and my purse, and you will not give me a specimen of your skill *gratis*.”

He advanced quickly to me, and muttered hoarsely in my ear:

“You deceive yourself! Let me see your hand.”

I gave it, looking fixedly at him; his eyes sparkled; he pretended to examine my hand.

“If the line of life,” said he, “is cut by two traverse lines, death will be next.

“If the line of health is not in the centre of the hand, and if there is only the line of fortune united so as to form an angle, we ought not to look for a natural death. Do not, therefore, look for a natural death! If the bottom of the forefinger has a long line cutting it, a violent death will be the result. Do you hear? Prepare yourself for a violent death!”

There was a ring of pleasure in this sepulchral voice which announced my death, but I listened to him with contempt and indifference.

"Sorcerer," said I, with a disdainful smile, "you are skillful, for you are speaking of a certainty."

Once more he came closer to me.

"You doubt my science? Ah, well! listen, once more. The severance of the line of the sun on your forehead shows me that you take an enemy for a friend, and a friend for an enemy."

These words seemed to refer to the treacherous Pierrot, whom I loved, but who had betrayed me, and to the faithful Habibrah, who I had hated, and whose blood-stained garments attested his fidelity and his devotion.

"What do you say?" I exclaimed.

"Listen until the end," continued the Obi. "I spoke of the future, here is the past: The line of the moon on your forehead is slightly curved;—this signifies that your wife has been carried off."

I trembled; and endeavored to spring from my seat; but my guards held me back.

"You are not patient," continued the sorcerer; "listen to the end. The little cross that cuts the extremity of that curve

shows me all ; your wife was carried off on the very night of your nuptials."

"Wretch," cried I, "you know where she is! Who are you?"

I strove again to free myself, and to tear away his veil ; but I had to yield to numbers and to force, and I saw with rage the mysterious Obi move away repeating :

"Do you believe me now? Prepare thyself for death."





XXXII.

My attention was drawn from the perplexity into which I had been thrown by the strange scene, to a new drama which succeeded the farce that had been played before their amazed band.

Biassou had again taken his place upon his mahogany throne; the Obi was seated on his right, Rigaud on his left, on the two squares which accompanied the chief's throne. The Obi, with his arms crossed on his breast, seemed to have given himself up to deep thought. Biassou and Rigaud were chewing tobacco; and an aide-de-camp had just asked the *mariscal de campo* if he should order a general march of the forces, when three tumultuous groups of negroes, with hideous shouts, arrived at the entrance of the grotto. Each one of these groups brought a prisoner to be judged by Biassou, not to know whether he would forgive them but to know the manner of death which the unfortunate ones should endure. Their sinister cries announced as much: "*Mort! Mort!*" "*Muerte! Muerte!*" and "Death! Death!" cried some English

negroes from Bouckmann's band, many of whom had by this time arrived to join Biassou's French and Spanish negroes.

The *mariscal de campo* with a gesture of his hand commanded silence, and ordered the three captives to be brought to the entrance of the grotto. I recognized two of them with considerable surprise; one was citizen-General C——, that philanthropist who was in correspondence with all the lovers of the negro race in different parts of the globe, and who had proposed to the governor so cruel a mode of suppressing the insurrection. The other was the planter of doubtful origin, who manifested so great a dislike to the mulattoes, amongst whom the whites insisted on classing him. The third appeared to belong to a section called "*poor whites*;" he wore a leathern apron, and his sleeves were turned up to his elbows. All three had been taken at different times, hiding in the mountains.

The "poor white" was the first one that was questioned.

"Who are you?" asked Biassou.

"I am Jacques Belin, carpenter to the Hospital of the Fathers, at Cap."

Surprise and shame struggled for the mastery in the eyes of the *generalissimo* of the conquered country.

"Jacques Belin!" repeated he, biting his lips.

"Yes," replied the carpenter; "do you not recognize me?"

"Begin," retorted the *mariscal de campo* furiously, "by recognizing and saluting *me*."

"I do not salute my slave," replied the carpenter.

"Your slave, wretch!" cried the general.

"Yes," replied the carpenter; "yes, I was your first master. You pretend not to recognize me; but recollect, Jean Biassou, that I sold you for thirteen piastres to a Santo Domingo slave merchant."

An expression of concentrated rage passed over Biassou's face.

"Well," continued the carpenter, "you appear ashamed of having worked for me; ought not Jean Biassou to feel proud of having belonged to Jacques Belin? Your own mother, the old idiot, has often swept out my shop; but now I have sold her to the major-domo of the Hospital of the Fathers; she was so decrepit, that he would only give me thirty-two livres and six sous for her. There is your history and mine; but it seems as if the negroes and the mulattoes are growing proud, and that you have forgotten the time when, on your knees, you served Master Jacques Belin, the carpenter at Cap."

Biassou listened to him with that sardonic smile that gave him the appearance of a tiger.

"Good!" said he.

Then he turned to the negroes who had captured Belin :

"Get two trestles, two planks, and a saw, and take this man away. Jacques Belin, carpenter of Cap, thank me, for you shall have a true carpenter's death."

His sardonic laugh too fully explained the horrible manner in which he intended to punish the pride of his former master. I shivered ; but Jacques Belin did not frown ; he turned proudly to Biassou.

"Yes," said he, "I ought to thank you, for I sold you for thirteen piastres, and you certainly brought me more than you were worth."

They dragged him away.

XXXIII.

More dead than alive, the other two prisoners had witnessed this frightful prologue of their own end. Their timid and terrified appearance contrasted with the rather boastful audacity of the carpenter; they trembled in every limb.

Biassou looked at them one after the other with a fox-like glance, then, taking pleasure in prolonging their agony, he began a discussion with Rigaud upon the different kinds of tobacco, asserting that Havana tobacco was only good for manufacturing cigars, whilst for snuff he knew nothing better than the Spanish tobacco, two barrels of which Bouckmann had sent him, being a portion of the plunder of M. Lebattu's stores in the Turtle island. Then turning sharply upon citizen-General C——, he asked him :

“What is your opinion?”

This sudden address utterly confounded the timid citizen. He stammered out :

“General, I am entirely of your Excellency's opinion.”

"You flatter me," replied Biassou; "I want *your* opinion and not mine. Do you know any tobacco that makes better snuff than that of Mr. Lebattu's?"

"No, my lord," answered C——, whose evident terror greatly amused Biassou.

"General! Your Excellency!" "My Lord!" replied the chief impatiently. "You are an aristocrat."

"Oh, no, certainly not," exclaimed the citizen-general: "I am a good patriot of '91, and an ardent négrophile."

"Négrophile!" interrupted the general. "Pray what is a négrophile?"

"It is a friend of the blacks," stammered the citizen.

"It is not enough to be a friend of the blacks; you must also be a friend of the men of color."

I believe I have said that Biassou was a half-caste.

"Men of color is what I should have said," replied the lover of the blacks, humbly. "I am acquainted with all the most famous partisans of the negroes and the mulattoes."

Biassou again interrupted him, delighted at the opportunity of humiliating a white man.

"Negroes and mulattoes! What do you mean, pray? do you come here to insult me with these odious names invented out of

contempt by the whites? There are only men of color and blacks here—do you understand that, Mr. Planter?"

"It was a slip, a bad habit contracted in childhood," answered C——. "Pardon me, my lord, I have no wish to offend you."

"Leave off this 'my lording' business; I have already told you that I don't like these aristocratic ways."

C—— again endeavored to excuse himself, and began to stammer out a fresh explanation.

"If you knew me, citizen . . ."

"Citizen! for whom do you take me?" cried Biassou, with anger. "I detest all this Jacobin jargon. Perhaps you are a Jacobin? Remember that you are speaking to the generalissimo of the king's troops. 'Citizen!' Insolent!"

The unhappy partisan of the negro race did not know in what terms to address this man who equally disdained the titles of "my lord" or "citizen," the aristocratic and republican modes of salutation; he was beside himself. Biassou, whose anger was only assumed, cruelly enjoyed his embarrassment.

"Alas," at last said the citizen-general, "you do me an injustice, noble defender of the unwritten rights of half the human race."

In his perplexity to hit upon an acceptable mode of address to a man who appeared to

disdain all titles, he had recourse to one of those sonorous periphrases which the republicans occasionally substituted for the name and title of the persons with whom they were in conversation.

Biassou looked at him steadily and said :

“Do you love the blacks and the mulattoes?”

“Do I love them?” exclaimed citizen C——, “I correspond with Brissot and . . .”

Biassou interrupted him with a sardonic laugh. “Ha, ha, I am glad to find in you a friend to our cause. In this case you ought to detest those wretched colonists who punish our just insurrection by the most cruel executions; you ought to think, with us, that it is not the blacks, but the whites, who are the true rebels, since they revolt against the laws of nature and humanity! You ought to execrate these monsters!”

“I do execrate them,” answered C——.

“Well,” continued Biassou, “what do you think of a man who, in his endeavors to crush the latest efforts of the slaves to regain their liberty, placed the heads of fifty black men on each side of the avenue that led to his house?”

C——’s pallor became frightful.

“What do you think of a white man who would propose to surround the town of Cap with a circle of negro heads?”

"Mercy ! mercy !" cried the terrified citizen.

"Am I threatening you?" replied Biassou, coldly. "Let me finish. . . . A circle of heads that would surround the city from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol? What do you think of that? Answer me."

The words of Biassou, "Do I threaten you," had given a faint ray of hope to C——, for he fancied that the general might have heard of this terrible proposition without knowing the author of it; he therefore replied with some firmness, in order to remove any impression that the idea was his own :

"I consider such a suggestion an atrocious crime."

Biassou chuckled.

"Good, and what punishment should be inflicted on the man who proposed it?"

Here the unfortunate C—— hesitated.

"Well," cried Biassou, "are you the friend of the blacks or not?"

Of the two alternatives the négrophile chose the least threatening one, and seeing no hostile light in Biassou's eyes, he answered in a low voice :

"The guilty person deserves death."

"Very well answered," replied Biassou, calmly, and throwing aside the tobacco that he had been chewing.

Meanwhile, his air of indifference had given the unfortunate lover of the negro race some assurance; and he made another effort to dissipate any suspicions which might have been engendered against him.

"No one," cried he, "has a more ardent desire for your success than I. I correspond with Brissot and Pruneau de Pomme-Gouge, in France; Magaw, in America; Peter Paulus, in Holland; Abbé Tamburini, in Italy. . . ."

He continued to unfold the same philanthropic names which he formerly repeated under other circumstances and with a different motive, at the council held at M. de Blanchelande's, when Biassou interrupted him.

"Ah! What do I care about your correspondents? Tell me rather where are your granaries and store-houses, my army has need of supplies. Your plantations are doubtless rich, and your business must be lucrative since you correspond with so many merchants throughout the world."

Citizen C—— ventured timidly to remark:

"Heroes of humanity, these are not merchants, but philosophers, philanthropists, lovers of the race of blacks."

"Come, then," said Biassou, with a shake of his head, "if you have nothing that can be plundered, what good are you?"

This question afforded a chance of safety of which C—— eagerly availed himself.

“Illustrious warrior,” exclaimed he “have you an economist in your army?”

“What is that?” asked the general.

“It is,” replied the prisoner, with as much calmness as his fears would permit him to assume, “it is a most necessary man, one whom all appreciate, one who follows out and classes in their proper order the respective material resources of an empire, and gives to each its real value, increasing and improving them by combining their sources and results, and pouring them like fertilizing streams into the main river of general utility, which in its turn swells the great sea of public prosperity.”

“*Caramba !*” observed Biassou, leaning over towards the Obi. “What the deuce does he mean by all these words strung together like the beads on your rosary?”

The Obi shrugged his shoulders in sign of ignorance and disdain. However, citizen C—— continued :

“I have studied—deign to hear me, valiant chief of the regenerators of Santo Domingo—I have studied the works of the greatest economists—Turgot, Raynal, and Mirabeau, the friend of man. I have put their theories into practice, I thoroughly understand the

science indispensable for the government of kingdoms and states . . .”

“The economist is not economical in his words,” observed Rigaud, with his bland and cunning smile.

“But you, eternal talker,” cried Biassou, “tell me, have I any kingdoms or states to govern?”

“Not yet perhaps, great man,” replied C——, “but they will come; and besides, my knowledge extends to all the useful details for the management of an army.”

The general again interrupted him.

“I do not manage my army, Mr. Planter, I command it.”

“Good,” replied the citizen; “you shall be the commander, I will be the commissary; I have much special knowledge as to the breeding of cattle.”

“Do you think we are going to breed cattle?” cried Biassou, with his sardonic laugh; “we eat them. When cattle become scarce in the French colony I shall cross the line of mountains on the frontier and take the Spanish sheep and oxen which are raised on the plains of Cotuy, of La Vega, of Sant-Jago, and from the banks of the Yuna; if necessary I will look for those which graze on the peninsula of Samana, and back of the mountain of Cibos, and

from the mouths of the Neybe to those of Santo Domingo. Besides, I should be glad to punish those infernal Spanish planters. Those who delivered up Ogé! You see I am not uneasy as regards provisions, and so have no need of your superior knowledge!"

This open declaration disconcerted the poor economist; he made, however, one more effort for safety.

"My studies," said he, "have not been limited to the reproduction of cattle, I am acquainted with other special branches of knowledge that may be very useful to you. I can show you the method of manufacturing pitch and working coal mines."

"What is that to me!" exclaimed Biassou. "When I want charcoal I burn three leagues of forest."

"I can tell you the proper use of all kinds of wood," continued the prisoner; "the chicaron and the sabiecca for the keels of ships; the yabas for the knee of sternpost; the medlars for the framework; the hacomas, the gaïacs, the cedars, the acomas——"

"*Que te lleven todos los demonios de los diez-y-siete infiernos!*" ("May the devils of the seventeen hells fly away with you!") cried Biassou, impatiently.

"I beg your pardon, my gracious patron," said the trembling economist, who did not understand Spanish.

"Listen," said Biassou, "I don't need vessels, there is only one vacancy in my suite. It is not the place of *major-domo*, it is the position of valet. Tell me, *señor filosofo* (Mr. Philosopher), if that will suit you? you will have to serve me on your bended knees; you will carry my pipe, cook my *calalou* and turtle soup; and you will bring my *calalou* (Creole stew); and will carry behind me a fan of peacock or parrot feathers, like those two pages which you see. Well! answer, do you wish to be my valet?"

Citizen C——, whose only desire was to save his life, bent to the earth with a thousand expressions of joy and gratitude.

"You accept then?" asked Biassou.

"Do you think, generous master, that I hesitate for a moment before accepting so distinguished a post as that of being in constant attendance on you?"

At this reply the diabolical sneer of Biassou became more pronounced. He rose up with an air of triumph, crossing his arms and thrusting aside with his foot the head of the white man who was prostrate on the ground before him, he cried in a loud voice:

“I am delighted at being able to prove how far the cowardice of the white man could go, after having seen the extent of their cruelty. Citizen C——, it is to you that I owe this double experience. I know all; how could you have been sufficiently stupid to think that I did not perceive it? It was you who presided at the executions of June, July, and August; it was you who placed fifty negro heads on each side of your avenue in place of palms; it was you who proposed to slaughter the five hundred negroes who were confined in irons after the revolt, and to encircle the town of Cap with their heads from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol. If you could have done it you would have placed my head amongst them; now you think yourself lucky if I will take you as my body-servant. No, no! I have more regard for your honor than you yourself have; and I will not inflict this affront on you. Prepare to die!”

He made a gesture, and the negroes removed the unhappy lover of the blacks to a position near me, where, without being able to articulate a word, he fell to the ground fainting.

XXXIV.

"It is your turn now," said the general, turning to the last of the prisoners, the planter who was accused by the white men of being a mulatto, and who had on that account sent me a challenge.

A general clamor drowned the planter's reply. "*Muerte ! Muerte !* Death ! *Mort ! Touyé ! Touyé !*" cried the negroes, grinding their teeth, and shaking their fists at the unhappy captive.

"General," said a mulatto, making himself heard above the uproar, "he is a white man, and he must die !"

The poor planter, by cries and gestures, was at last able to get a hearing.

"No, no, general, no, my brothers, I am not a white man. It is infamous calumny ! I am a mulatto, of mixed blood ; son of a negress, like your mother and sisters."

"He lies," cried the infuriated negroes, "he is a white man, he has always detested blacks and colored people."

"Never," retorted the prisoner. "It is the whites that I detest. I am one of your





brothers. I have always said with you : '*Nègre cé blan, blan cé nègre.*'" ("The negroes are the whites, the whites are the negroes," or, more freely translated : "The negroes are the masters, the whites are the slaves.")

"Not at all," cried the crowd, "not at all; *touyé blan, touyé blan !*" ("Kill the white man ! Kill the white man !")

Still the unhappy wretch kept repeating in heartrending accents :

"I am a mulatto, I am one of yourselves."

"Give me a proof," was Biassou's sole reply.

"A proof," answered the prisoner, wildly, "a proof is that the whites have always despised me."

"That may be true," returned Biassou, "but you are an insolent hound to tell us so."

A young mulatto stepped to the front and addressed the planter in an excited manner.

"The whites justly despised you ; but, on the other hand, you affected to look down upon the mulattoes, amongst whom they classed you. It has even been reported that you once challenged a white man who called you a half-caste."

A howl of execration arose from the crowd, and the cry of "death" was repeated more loudly than ever, whilst the planter, casting

at me a look of disappointment and prayer, continued, with tears in his eyes :

“It is a calumny, my greatest glory and happiness is in belonging to the blacks. I am a mulatto.”

“If you really were a mulatto,” observed Rigaud, quietly, “you would not make use of that hated expression.”

“Alas ! how do I know what I am saying ?” asked the panic-stricken wretch. “General, the proof that I am of mixed blood is in the black circle that you see round the bottom of my nails.”⁹

Biassou thrust aside the suppliant hand.

“I do not possess the knowledge of our chaplain, who can tell what a man is by looking at his hand. But listen to me: my soldiers accuse you—some, of being a white man ; others, of being a false brother. If this is the case you ought to die. You, on the other hand, assert that you belong to our race, and that you have never denied it. There remains with you one method by which you can prove your assertions and save yourself.”

“What, general, what ?” demanded the planter with eagerness. “I am ready.”

“Here,” said Biassou, coldly, “take this dagger and stab these two white prisoners !”

As he spoke he designated us with a look and with a wave of his hand. The planter

drew back from the dagger which, with a devilish smile on his face, Biassou presented to him.

"What," said the general, "do you hesitate? It is your only chance of proving your assertion to the army that you are not a white, and are one of ourselves. Come, decide at once, you have no time to lose."

The prisoner's eyes glared wildly. He stretched out his hand towards the dagger, then let his arm fall again, and stopped to turn away his head. Every limb quivered with emotion.

"Come, come," cried Biassou, in tones of impatience and anger, "I am in a hurry. Make your choice—either kill them, or die with them!"

The planter remained motionless, as if he had been turned to stone.

"Good!" said Biassou, turning towards the negroes, "he does not wish to be the executioner, let him be the victim. I can see that he is nothing but a white man—away with him; you others!"

The negroes advanced to seize the planter. This movement impelled him to immediately choose between giving or receiving death. Extreme cowardice produces also courage. He snatched the dagger that Biassou still held out to him, and without giving himself time

to reflect upon what he was about to do, he precipitated himself like a tiger upon citizen C——, who was lying on the ground near me.

Then a terrible struggle commenced. The lover of the negro race, who had, at the conclusion of his interview with Biassou, remained plunged in a state of despair and stupor, had noticed the scene between the general and the planter with fixed gaze, and so absorbed was he in the thought of his approaching death that he had not appeared to comprehend it; but when he saw the man rush upon him, and the steel gleam above his head, the imminence of his danger aroused him at once. He started to his feet, grasped the arm of his would-be murderer, and exclaimed in a voice of terror—

“Pardon! pardon! What are you doing? What have I done?”

“You must die, sir,” said the half-caste, fixing his frenzied eyes upon his victim, and endeavoring to disengage his arm. “Let me do it; I will not hurt you.”

“Die by your hand,” cried the economist; “but why? Spare me! you wish perhaps to kill me because I used to say that you were a mulatto. But spare my life, and I vow that I will always declare that you are a white man. Yes, you are white, I will say so everywhere, but spare me!”

The unfortunate man had taken the wrong method of suing for mercy.

"Silence! silence!" cried the half-caste, furiously, and fearing the negroes would hear the assertion.

But the other cried louder than ever, without listening to him, that he knew that he was a white man, and of good family. The half-caste made a last effort to impose silence on him, he thrust aside his arms and pressed the dagger upon C——'s breast. The unhappy man felt the point of the weapon, and in his rage bit the arm which held it.

"Monster! wretch! You are murdering me!"

He cast a glance of supplication towards Biassou.

"Defend me, avenger of humanity!"

But the murderer pressed more heavily on the dagger; a gush of blood bubbled over his fingers, and spattered his face. The knees of the unhappy lover of the negro race bent beneath him, his arms fell by his side, his eyes closed, and he uttered a stifled groan. Then he fell dead.

XXXV.

I was paralyzed with horror at this scene, in which I every moment expected to play an important part. The "Avenger of Humanity" had gazed on the struggle of his two victims without flinching. When all was over, he turned to his terrified pages.

"Bring me more tobacco," said he; and began to chew calmly.

The Obi and Rigaud were impassible, and the negroes appeared terrified at the horrible drama that their general had caused to be enacted before them.

One white man, however, yet remained to be slaughtered, it was I; my turn had come. I cast a glance upon the murderer who was about to become my executioner. He had some pity for me. His lips were violet, his teeth chattered, a convulsive tremor caused every limb to quiver, making him totter. By a mechanical movement his hand was continually passed over his forehead, as if to obliterate the traces of the blood; and he looked with an air of terrified wonder at the bleeding body which lay at his feet. His

haggard eyes could not take themselves from his victim.

I waited for the moment when he would resume his task by my blood. I was in a strange position with this man: he had already failed to kill me, to prove that he was white: he was going to murder me to show that he was a mulatto.

"Come," said Biassou, addressing him, "that is good; I am pleased with you, my friend." Then glancing at me, he added: "You need not finish the other one. Go away. We declare you one of us, and name you executioner to the army."

At these words of the chief a negro stepped out of the ranks, bowed three times before Biassou, and cried out in his jargon—which I will translate into French to facilitate matters.

"And I, general?"

"Well, what do you want?" asked Biassou.

"Are you going to do nothing for me, general?" asked the negro. "Here you give an important post to this dog of a white, who murders in order to prove that he is one of ourselves. Have you no post to give to me, who am a true black?"

This unexpected request seemed to embarrass Biassou; he leaned toward Rigaud, and the chief of the Assembly of Cayes whispered to him in French:

"You can't satisfy him; try to elude his request."

"You wish for promotion, then?" asked Biassou, of the true black. "Well, I am willing enough to grant it to you. What grade do you wish?"

"I wish to be an officer."

"An officer," replied the general. "And what are your claims to the epaulet founded on?"

"It was I," answered the negro, emphatically, "who set fire to the house of Lagoscelte in the first day of August last. It was I who murdered M. Clement, the planter, and carried the head of his sugar refiner on my pike. I killed ten white women and seven small children, one of whom on the point of a spear served as a standard for Bouckmann's brave blacks. Later on I burnt alive the families of four colonists, whom I had locked up in a strong room of Fort Galifet. My father was broken on the wheel at Cap, my brother was hung at Rocrou, and I narrowly escaped being shot. I have burnt three coffee plantations, six indigo estates, and two hundred acres of sugar-cane; I murdered my master, M. Noé, and his mother . . ."

"Spare us the recital of your services," said Rigaud, whose feigned benevolence was

the mask for real cruelty, but who was ferocious with decency, and could not listen to this cynical confession of deeds of violence.

"I could quote many others," continued the negro, proudly, "but you will no doubt consider that these are sufficient to insure my promotion, and to entitle me to wear a gold epaulet on my coat like my comrades there."

He pointed to the aides-de-camp and the staff of Biassou. The general affected to reflect for a few minutes, and then gravely addressed these words to the negro :

"I am satisfied with your services, and should be pleased to promote you, but you must satisfy me on one point. Do you understand Latin?"

The astonished negro opened his eyes widely, and said :

"Eh, general?"

"Yes," repeated Biassou, quickly; "do you understand Latin?"

"La . . . Latin?" stammered the astonished negro.

"Yes, yes, yes, Latin; do you understand Latin?" said the cunning chief. And, unfolding a banner upon which was embroidered the verse from the Psalms, *In exitu Israël de Ægypto*, he added, "Explain the meaning of these words."

The negro, in complete ignorance of what was meant, remained silent and motionless, fumbling with the waistband of his trousers, whilst his astonished eyes wandered from the banner to the general, and from the general back to the banner.

"Come, go on," exclaimed Biassou, impatiently.

The negro opened and shut his mouth several times, scratched his head, and at last said, hesitatingly :

"I don't understand it, general."

Biassou's face took on an expression of anger and indignation.

"How, scoundrel!" cried he; "how! you wish to become an officer, and you do not understand Latin!"

"But, general," stammered the confused and trembling negro.

"Silence," roared Biassou, whose anger appeared to increase; "I do not know what prevents me from having you shot at once for your presumption. Do you understand, Rigaud, this impertinent officer who does not even know Latin? Well then, idiot, as you do not understand what is written on this banner I will explain. *In exitu*—every soldier, *Israël*—who does not understand Latin, *de Egypto*—cannot be made an officer. Is it not that, reverend sir?"

The little Obi bowed his head in the affirmative, and Biassou continued :

“This brother of whom you are jealous, and whom I have appointed executioner, understands Latin !”

He turned to the new executioner :

“Is it not true, my friend ? Prove to this blockhead that you know more than he does. What is the meaning of *Dominus vobiscum* ?”

The unhappy half-caste, roused from his gloomy reverie by the dreaded voice, raised his head, and though his brain was still troubled by the cowardly murder that he had just committed, terror compelled him to be obedient. There was something pitiable in his manner, as this man searched in his mind for some remembrance of his schooldays, in the midst of his terrible feelings and remorse he repeated, in the tone of a child saying its lessons :

“*Dominus vobiscum* . . . that means, ‘May the Lord be with you.’”

“*Et cum spiritu tuo*,” added the mysterious Obi, solemnly.

“*Amen*,” repeated Biassou. Then, resuming his angry tone, and mingling with his reproaches some bad Latin phrases, after the manner of Sganarelle, to impress the negroes with the superior attainments of their chief,

he cried to the ambitious negro, "Go to the rear ranks, *sursum corda* ! Never in the future attempt to enter the places of those who know Latin *orate fratres*, or I will have you hung ! *Bonus, bona, bonum !* "

The astonished and terrified negro returned to the ranks, shamefully bowing his head in the midst of the hisses of his comrades, who were indignant at his presumption, and impressed with the deep learning of their general.

There was a burlesque side to this scene, which inspired me with a very high idea of Biassou's administrative capabilities. The ridiculous means he had used with so much success (Toussaint-Louverture used the same bluff with the same results a little later), to repress the ambitious, always so dangerous in an army of rebels, gave me an idea of the stupidity of the negroes and the shrewdness of their chief.

XXXVI.

Meanwhile the almuerzo (breakfast) hour of Biassou had now arrived. There was placed before the *mariscal de campo de su magestad catolica* a large shell of a turtle, in which smoked a species of *ollapodrida* seasoned with bacon, in which turtle flesh took the place of *carnero* (lamb), and a mess of gray peas, *garganzas*. An enormous carib cabbage floated on the surface of the *puchero* (stew). On either side of the shell, which served as a pot or a soup-tureen, were two cocoanut shells, full of dried raisins and *sandias* (water-melons), yams and figs; this was the *postre* (dessert). A loaf of maize bread; and a bottle of wine, bound round with a tarred string, completed the feast. Biassou took from his pocket a few heads of garlic and rubbed his bread with them; then, without ordering the bleeding form before him to be carried away, he began to eat, inviting Rigaud to do the same. Biassou's appetite was something terrible.

The Obi did not join their repast; like others in his profession, I could easily understand

that he never took anything in public, to induce a belief amongst the negroes that he was supernatural and that he lived entirely without food.

During breakfast, Biassou ordered one of his aides-de-camp to order the march past to commence, and the different corps began to defile past in fairly good order before the grotto. The negroes of Morne-Rouge were the first; there were about four thousand of them, divided into companies commanded by chiefs, decorated, as I have already said, with scarlet breeches and sashes. These tall and powerful negroes; carried guns, axes and sabres; a great many had bows and arrows, and javelins rudely made from other arms. They carried no standard, and moved past in mournful silence.

Seeing this band pass, Biassou whispered to Rigaud, in French:

“When will Blanchelande’s and Rouvray’s shot and shell free me from these bandits of Morne-Rouge? I hate them, they are nearly all of them *congos*, and they only believe in killing in open battle; they follow the example of their imbecile chief, of their idol Bug-Jargal, a young fool, who plays at being generous and magnanimous. You do not know him, Rigaud, and I hope you never will. The whites have taken him prisoner, and they

may perhaps rid me of him, as they did of Bouckmann."

"Speaking of Bouckmann," answered Rigaud, "there are the negroes of Macaya just passing, and I see in their ranks the negro whom Jean-François sent to you with the news of Bouckmann's death. Do you know that that man might upset all the prophecies of the Obi, if he were to say that he had been kept for more than half an hour at the outposts, and that he had told me the news before you sent for him?"

"*Diabolo!*" answered Biassou, "you are right, my friend; this man's mouth must be shut. Wait a bit."

Then raising his voice:

"Macaya," he called. The leader of the division left the ranks, and approached the general with the stock of his firelock reversed, in token of respect.

"Make that man who does not belong to your division leave his rank and come forward."

It was Jean-François' messenger. Macaya speedily brought him before the general, who at once assumed that appearance of anger which he knew so well how to simulate.

"Who are you?" cried he.

"General, I am a black."

"*Caramba!* I can see that well enough; but what is your name?"

“My nickname is Vavelan, my patron saint with the happy is Sabas, deacon and martyr, whose feast is on the twentieth day before the Nativity of our Lord.”

Biassou interrupted him:

“How dare you present yourself on parade, amidst shining muskets and white cross-belts, with your sword without a sheath, your breeches torn, and your feet muddy?”

“General,” answered the negro, “it is not my fault. I was dispatched by the Grand-Admiral, Jean-François, to bring you the news of the death of the chief of the English negroes, Bouckmann: and if my clothes are torn and my feet bemired, it is because I have run, without stopping to take breath, to bring you the news as soon as possible, but they detained me at the camp, and”

Biassou frowned.

“That is not the question, *gavache*! but of your audacity to appear in the review in this disorder. Commend your soul to Saint Sabas, deacon and martyr, your patron. Go and get yourself shot!”

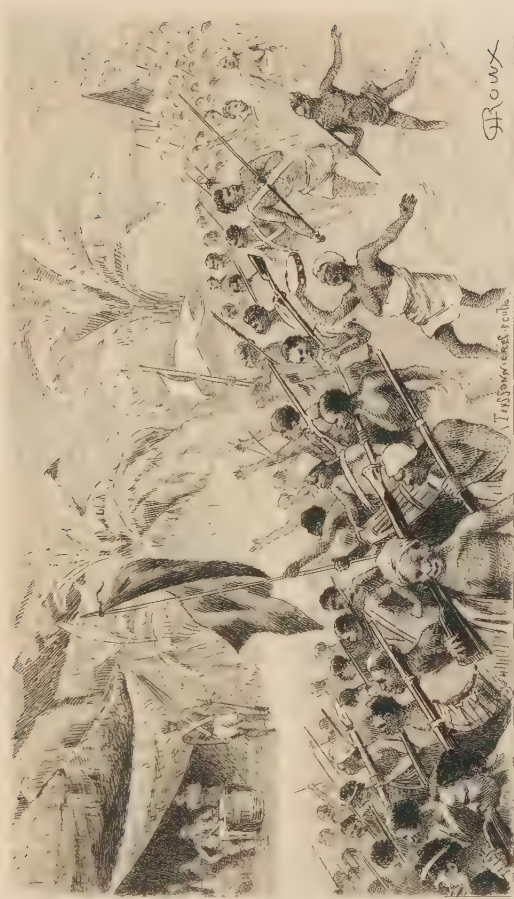
Here I had another proof of the moral power of Biassou over the insurgents. The unfortunate man who was ordered to go and get himself executed did not utter a

protest; he bowed his head, crossed his arms on his breast, saluted his pitiless judge three times, and after having knelt before the Obi, who gave him plenary absolution, he left the cavern. A few minutes afterwards a volley of musketry announced to Biassou that the negro had obeyed, was no more.

The general freed from all sources of uneasiness, turned to Rigaud, a gleam of pleasure in his eye, and gave a triumphant chuckle which seemed to say—"Admire me!"¹⁰

XXXVII.

Meanwhile the march continued. This army, which had presented so curious a spectacle in camp, had a no less extraordinary appearance under arms. Sometimes a horde of almost naked negroes would come along armed with clubs and tomahawks, marching, like mere savages, to the notes of a goat's horn; then would come regiments of mulattoes, dressed in the English or Spanish manner, well armed and disciplined, regulating their pace by the roll of the drum; then a band of negresses and their children carrying forks and spits, then some tag-rag bent under the weight of an old musket without lock or barrel; *griotes* with their feathered aprons, *griots* dancing with hideous contortions, and singing incoherent airs to the accompaniment of guitars, tomtoms, and balafos. This strange procession was from time to time, broken by detachments of dwarfs, priests, sacatras, Mamelukes, quadroons, free mulattoes, or wandering hordes of escaped slaves with a proud look of liberty on their faces and shining muskets, dragging in their ranks well-filled wagons, or some





Runy

Illustration of the battle

artillery taken from the whites, which were looked on more as trophies than as military engines, and yelling out at the top of their voices the songs of Grand-Pré and Ou-Nassé. Above their heads floated flags, banners, and standards of every form, color, and device—white, red, tricolor, with the lilies, with the cap of liberty, bearing inscriptions—*Death to Priests and Nobles! Long live Religion! Liberty and Equality! Long live the King! Down with the Metropolis! Viva España! No more Tyrant!* etc.;—a confusion of sentiments which showed that the insurgents were a mere crowd collected together, with ideas as different as were the men who composed it.

On passing in their turn before the cave, the companies drooped their banners, and Biassou returned the salute. He addressed every band either in praise or censure, and each word that dropped from his mouth was received by his men with fanatical respect or superstitious dread.

The crowd of savage soldiery passed away at last. I confess that the sight of so many brigands which had distracted me at first ended by wearying me. The sun went down as the last ranks filed away, and its rays cast a copper-colored hue upon the granite mountains to the eastward.

XXXVIII.

Biassou seemed in a reverie. When the review was concluded, his last orders had been given, and the insurgents had retired to the huts, he condescended to address me again.

"Young man," said he, "you have now had the means of judging of my power and genius; the time has now arrived for you to take an account of it to Léogri."

"It is not my fault that he has not had it earlier," answered I, coldly.

"You are right," replied Biassou. He then paused, as if to note what the effect would be upon me of what he was going to say, and then added, "But it will depend upon yourself whether he gets it or not."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed I, in astonishment.

"Yes," replied Biassou, "that your life depends upon yourself, and that you can save it if you will."

This sudden paroxysm of pity--the first, and no doubt the last, which had ever

possessed Biassou—surprised me much. The Obi, surprised as much as I, was seated on the steps where he had so long kept his position after the manner of the Hindoo fakir. He placed himself face to face with the general, addressing him in angry tones.

“Que dice el excelentísimo señor mariscal de campo?” (What are you saying, excellent general?) Have you forgotten your promise? Neither God nor you can dispose of this life, for it belongs to me.”

At that instant with this irritated accent I thought that I recognized the little man; but it was but a fleeting recollection, and in a moment had passed away.

Biassou got up from his seat without betraying any anger, spoke for a few moments in whispers to the Obi, and pointed to the black flag which I had already remarked, and after a little more conversation, the sorcerer nodded in sign of assent. Both of them then went back to their former positions.

“Listen to me,” said the general, drawing from his pocket the other dispatch from Jean-François. “Things are going ill. Bouckmann has been killed in battle. The whites have slaughtered more than two thousand blacks in the district of Cul-de-Sac. The colonists are continuing to establish and to

fortify military posts. By our own folly we lost the chance of taking Cap, and it will be long before another occasion will present itself. The eastern side of our line of march is cut by a river, and the whites have defended the passage by a pontoon battery and a fortified camp. On the south side they have planted artillery on the mountainous road called the Haut-du-Cap; they have defended it by troops of artillery. The position is defended by a strong stockade, at which all the inhabitants have labored, and in front of it are strong *chevaux-de-frise*. Cap, therefore, is beyond our reach. Our ambush in the ravines of Dompte-Mulâtre was a failure. To add to all these misfortunes, the Siamese fever, which depopulated Jean-François' army, has devastated our camps. In consequence, the Grand Admiral of France thinks, and we agree with him, that we should treat with the Governor Blanchelande and the Colonial Assembly. Here is the letter that we have addressed to the Assembly on this matter. Listen!

“GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF DEPUTIES:

“In the great misfortunes which have afflicted this great and important colony, we have also been enveloped, and there remains nothing for us to say in justification of our conduct. One day you will render us the justice that our conduct merits. We ought to be

included in the general pardon that King Louis XVI. has proclaimed for all.

“ ‘Accordingly, as the King of Spain is a good king, who treats us well, and has *testified it to us by rewards*, we shall continue to serve him with zeal and devotion.

“ ‘We see by the law of September 28, 1791, that the National Assembly and the king have agreed to definitely settle the status of slaves, and the political situation of people of color. We will defend the decrees of the National Assembly, invested with the requisite formalities, with the last drop of our blood. It would likewise be most interesting to us if you would *declare*, by an order sanctioned by your general, that it is your intention to investigate the condition of the slaves. Knowing that they are the objects of your solicitude, we, their chiefs, feel sure they will be satisfied and in a short time peace will be restored.

“ ‘Do not count, gentlemen deputies, upon our consenting to take up arms for the revolutionary Assemblies. We are the subjects of three kings—the King of Congo, the born master of all the blacks; the King of France, who represents our fathers; and the King of Spain, who represents our mothers. These three kings are descendants of those who, conducted by a star, worshiped the Man of God. If we serve the Assemblies, we might be forced to take up arms and to make war against our brothers, the subjects of those three kings to whom we have sworn fidelity.

“ ‘And, besides, we do not know what is meant by the will of the nation, seeing that the people rule, we have not executed that of the king. The Prince of France loves us; the King of Spain never ceases to help us. We aid them—they aid us; it is the cause of humanity; and, besides, if these kings should fail us we could soon *enthroned a king*.

“ ‘Such are our intentions, nevertheless, we now consent to make peace.

“ ‘*Signed*, JEAN-FRANÇOIS, General ; BIASSOU, Brigadier ; DESPREZ, MANZEAU, TOUSSAINT, AUBERT, Commissaires ; *ad hoc*. ’ ”

[It seems that this ridiculously characteristic letter was really sent to the Assembly.]

“ ‘You see,’ said Biassou, after he had read this piece of negro diplomacy, every word of which has remained imprinted on my memory, “ ‘you see that our intentions are peaceable ; this is what we want you to do : neither Jean-François nor I have been brought up in the schools of the whites, or learned the niceties of their language. We know how to fight, but not how to write. Now we do not wish that there should be anything in our letter to the Assembly at which our former masters could laugh. You seem to have learned those frivolous accomplishments in which we are lacking. Correct any faults you may find in this dispatch, so that it may excite no derision amongst the whites, and at this price I will give you your life ! ’ ”

This proposition of becoming the corrector of Biassou’s faults of spelling and composition was too repugnant to my pride for me to hesitate for a moment ; and besides, what did I care for life ? I declined his offer.

He appeared surprised.

"What!" exclaimed he, "you prefer death to scrawling a few marks with a pen on a piece of parchment?"

"Yes," replied I.

My determination seemed to embarrass him. After a few moments of thought he again addressed me.

"Listen, young fool. I am less obstinate than you are. I give you until to-morrow evening, up to the setting of the sun, when you shall again be brought before me. Think well then, before you refuse to obey my wishes. Adieu. Let night bring reflection to you. Remember, with us death is not simply death."

The sense of the last words, accompanied by a frightful grin, was not equivocal, and the awful tortures which it was Biassou's greatest pleasure to inflict upon his prisoners came to my mind.

"Candi," continued Biassou, "remove the prisoner, and give him in charge to the men of Morne-Rouge. I wish him to live for another day, and perhaps my other soldiers would not have the patience to let him do so."

The mulatto Candi, who commanded the guard, caused my arms to be bound behind my back. A soldier took hold of the end of the cord, and we left the grotto.

XXXIX.

When any extraordinary events, anxieties or catastrophes, intrude themselves suddenly into a life up to that period peaceful and happy, these unexpected emotions, these strokes of fortune, rudely interrupt the repose of the soul which lay dreaming in the monotony of prosperity. Misfortune which comes to one in this manner does not seem to be an awakening, but only a dream. For those who have always been happy, despair begins with stupor. Unexpected misery is like a torpedo, it shatters, but benumbs; and the frightful light which it suddenly throws before our eyes is not daylight. Men, acts, and things, at that time pass before us like a fantastic apparition, and move along as if in a dream. Everything in the horizon of our life is changed, atmosphere and perspective; but it still goes on for a long time before our eyes have lost that sort of luminous image of past happiness which follows them, and interposes without cessation between it and the sombre present, changing the color and giving to it, I do not know what, false reality. Then

everything that is, appears to be unreal and ridiculous, and we can scarcely believe in our own existence, because we find nothing around us that formerly used to compose our life, and we cannot understand how all can have gone away without taking us with it, and why nothing of our life remains to us. Were this strained position of the soul to continue long, it would disturb the equilibrium of the brain and become madness—a state happier perhaps than that which remains, for life then is nothing but a vision of past misfortune, acting like a ghost.

XL.

Gentlemen, I hardly know why I lay before you my thoughts. They are not those which you understand, or can be made to understand. You must experience them. I have proved them. But such was the state of my mind when the guards of Biassou handed me over to the negroes of Morne-Rouge. I appeared as if one body of phantoms passed me over to another, and without opposing any resistance I permitted them to bind me by the middle to a tree. They then gave me some boiled potatoes, which I ate with the mechanical instinct that God grants to man even in the midst of overwhelming thought.

Meanwhile darkness had now come on ; my guards took refuge in their huts, with the exception of half a dozen who remained with me sitting or lying before a large fire that they had lighted to keep off the cold night air. In a few moments they were all buried in profound sleep.

The state of physical weakness into which I had fallen caused my thoughts to wander in a strange manner. I thought of those calm and

peaceful days which, but a few weeks ago, I had passed with Marie, without being able to foresee in the future any possibility other than continued happiness. I compared them with the day that had just expired, a day in which so many strange events had occurred as almost to make me doubt their existence, when I had been three times condemned to death, and remained under sentence. I thought of my future, which consisted only of the morrow, and which offered nothing but misfortune, and a death happily near at hand. I seemed to be the victim of some terrible nightmare. I asked myself if all that had happened was real; was I really in the power of the sanguinary Biassou, was my Marie lost to me forever? and this prisoner, guarded by six savages, bound and condemned to certain death, this prisoner, seen by the glare of the brigands' fire, was it really I? In spite of all my efforts to repel them, the thoughts of Marie would force themselves upon me. In anguish I thought of her fate; I strained my bonds in my efforts to break them, and to fly to her succor, ever hoping that the terrible dream would pass away, and that God would not permit all the horrors that I dreaded to fall upon the angel who had been given me for my wife. In my sad pre-occupation the thought of Pierrot returned to

me, and rage nearly took away my senses; the pulses of my temples throbbed nearly to bursting; I hated him, I cursed him; I despised myself for having ever had friendship for Pierrot at the same time I had felt love for Marie; and, without caring to seek for the motive which had urged him to cast himself into the waters of Grande-Riviere, I wept because he had escaped me. He was dead; I was about to die; and the only thing that I regretted was that I had been unable to wreak my vengeance upon him.

All these thoughts passed through my brain during the state of semi-somnolency into which my weakness had plunged me. I do not know how long it lasted, but I was suddenly aroused by a man's voice singing distinctly, but at some distance: "*Yo que soy contrabandista.*" Quivering with emotion I opened my eyes; all was dark, the negroes slept, the fire was dying. I could hear nothing more. I fancied that the voice must have been a dream, and my sleep-laden eyelids closed again. In a second I opened them; again I heard the voice singing sadly, but much nearer, this verse of a Spanish Romance:

En los campos de Ocana,

Prisionero caí :

Me llevan à Cotadilla ;

Desdichado fui.

In the fields of Ocana
I became prisoner;
They took me to Cotadilla;
Unhappy was I!

This time it was not a dream. It *was* Pierrot's voice. A few moments elapsed, then it rose again through the silence and the gloom, and for the second time I heard the well-known air of "*Yo que soy contrabandista.*" A dog ran eagerly to greet me, and rolled at my feet; it was Rask! I raised my eyes. A negro stood facing me, and the glimmer of the fire threw at the side of the dog his colossal shadow; it was Pierrot! The thirst for vengeance fired my brain; surprise rendered me motionless and dumb. I was not asleep. Could the dead return? This is not a dream but an apparition. I turned from him with horror. Seeing this, his head sank upon his breast.

"Brother," murmured he, in a low voice, "you promised that you would never doubt me when you heard me sing that song. Brother, tell me, have you forgotten your promise?"

Rage restored the power of speech to me.

"Monster," exclaimed I, "do I find you at last! Butcher, murderer of my uncle, ravisher of Marie, dare you call me your brother? Stop, do not approach me!"

I forgot that I was too securely tied to make the slightest movement and glanced to my left side as though to seek my sword. My intention did not escape him. He continued in a sorrowful tone of voice—

“No, no, I will not come near you—you are unhappy, I pity you; you, you, have no pity for me, though I am much more wretched than you are.”

I shrugged my shoulders; he understood this silent reply. He looked at me in a dreamy manner.

“Yes, you have lost much; but, believe me, I have lost more than you have.”

But the sound of our conversation had aroused the six negroes who guarded me. Perceiving a stranger they leaped to their feet and seized their weapons; but as soon as they recognized the intruder they uttered a cry of surprise and joy, and cast themselves at his feet, striking the ground with their foreheads.

But the homage that the negroes rendered to Pierrot, the caresses which Rask bestowed both upon myself and his master, who gazed at me with uneasiness, as though astonished at my cold reception, made no impression upon me at the moment. I was boiling over with passion, and maddened at the bonds that retained me.

“Oh!” I exclaimed, crying with anger under the chains which held me, “Oh! how unhappy I am! I was grieving because I thought that this wretch had committed suicide. I thought him dead, and I was deprived of my vengeance; now he is here to mock me; he is here, living under my eyes, and I am powerless to stab him. Oh! who will free me from these accursed cords?”

Pierrot turned to the negroes, who were still prostrate before him.

“Comrades,” said he, “release the prisoner!”

XLI.

He was promptly obeyed. With the greatest eagerness my six guards cut asunder the ropes that confined me. I rose up free, but I remained motionless, for surprise rooted me to the spot.

“That is not all,” said Pierrot, and snatching a dagger from one of the negroes, he handed it to me, saying: “You can now have your wish; Heaven would not be pleased should I dispute your right to dispose of my life. Three times you have preserved it. It is yours, strike now; if you wish, strike!”

There was no sign of anger or of bitterness in his face; he appeared resigned and mournful.

The very vengeance offered to me by the man with whom I had so much longed to stand face to face, prevented my seizing the opportunity. I felt that all my hatred for Pierrot, all my love for Marie, could not induce me to commit a cowardly murder; besides, however damning appearances might be, yet a voice from the depths of my heart warned me that no criminal, no guilty man, would thus dare to stand before me and





brave my vengeance. Shall I confess it to you, there was a certain imperious fascination about this extraordinary being which conquered me in spite of myself; I pushed aside the dagger he offered to me.

“Wretch!” cried I, “I wish to kill you in fair fight, but not to assassinate you. Defend yourself!”

“Defend myself,” replied he, in tones of astonishment, “and against whom?”

“Against me!”

He made a sign. “Against you! that is the only thing in which I cannot obey you. Do you see Rask? I could easily kill him, for he would let me do it; but I could not make him fight me, he would not understand me. I do not understand you; in your case I am Rask.”

He added, after a short silence:

“I see the gleam of hate in your eyes, as you once saw it in mine. I know that you have suffered much, that your uncle has been murdered, your plantations burned, your friends slaughtered—yes, they have plundered your house, and devastated your inheritance; but it was not I, it was my people. Listen, I one day told you that your people had done me much injury, you said that you must not be blamed for the acts of others. What was my reply?”

His face grew brighter as he awaited my reply, evidently expecting that I should embrace him. I regarded him with an angry look.

"You disdain all responsibility as to the acts of your people, but you say nothing about what you have yourself done."

"What have I done?" asked he.

I stepped up close to him, and in a voice of thunder I demanded, "Where is Marie! what have you done with Marie?"

At this question a cloud passed over his face; he seemed momentarily embarrassed. At last he spoke. "*Maria!*" said he, "yes; you are right . . . but too many ears listen to us here."

His embarrassment, the words, "You are right," raised a hell of jealousy in my heart. I saw he eluded my question. Still he gazed upon me with a perfectly open countenance, and in a voice trembling with emotion said:

"Do not suspect me, I implore you. Besides, I will tell you everything. Love me, as I love you, with perfect trust."

He paused to mark the effect of his words, and then added tenderly, "May I not again call you brother?"

But my angry jealousy had resumed its violence, his friendly words seemed to me hypocritical, and only served to exasperate me.

“Dare you recall to me those days, monster of ingratitude?” I exclaimed.

He interrupted me. Tears were shining in his eyes.

“It is not I who am ungrateful.”

“Well, then, speak,” I continued, passionately. “What have you done with Marie?”

“Not here, not here,” answered he, “other ears than ours listen to our words. Besides, you would not believe my word, and time presses. The day has come, and you must be removed from here. Listen, all is at an end, since you doubt me, and you would have done better to finish me with the dagger, but wait a little before you take what you call your vengeance ; I must first free you. Come with me to find Biassou.”

His manner, both in speaking and acting, concealed a mystery which I could not understand. In spite of all my prejudices against the man, his voice always made my heart vibrate. In listening to him I did not know what power subjugated me. I found myself hesitating between vengeance and pity, between distrust and blind confidence.

I followed him.

XLII.

We left the camp of the negroes of Morne-Rouge. I was astonished at walking free in this barbarous camp, where each man seemed to thirst for my blood. Far from seeking to bar our progress, the negroes and the mulattoes prostrated themselves on all sides, with exclamations of surprise, joy and respect. I was ignorant what rank Pierrot held in the army of the insurgents; but I remembered the influence that he used to exercise over his companions in slavery, and this appeared to me to account for the respect with which he was treated by his comrades in rebellion.

On our arrival at the guard before the grotto of Biassou, the mulatto Candi, their chief, advanced before us, with threatening gestures, demanding how we dared approach so near the general; but when he came near enough to recognize the features of Pierrot he hurriedly removed his gold-laced cap, as though terrified at his own audacity, bowed to the ground, and introduced us into Biassou's presence, with a thousand apologies, to which Pierrot only answered by a disdainful gesture.

The respect with which the simple negro soldiers had treated Pierrot excited my surprise very little, but seeing Candi, one of the principal officers, humiliate himself thus before my uncle's slave, I began to ask myself who this man could be whose power was illimitable. How much more astonished was I, then, when I saw the general, who was alone when we entered, and was quietly enjoying his *calalou*, rise precipitately, out of respect to Pierrot, but concealing disappointment and surprise under the appearance of profound respect, also bow humbly to my companion, and offer him his mahogany throne. Pierrot declined it.

"Jean Biassou," said he, "I have not come to take your place, but simply to ask a favor at your hands."

"*Alteza*," answered Biassou, redoubling his obeisances, "you know well that all Jean Biassou has is yours, and that you can dispose of all that belongs to Biassou, of Jean Biassou himself."

This title of *Alteza*, which is equivalent to that of *Highness*, given to Pierrot by Biassou, also increased my astonishment.

"I do not ask for so much," replied Pierrot, quickly; "I only ask you for the life and liberty of this prisoner."

He pointed to me. Biassou appeared embarrassed, but he speedily recovered himself.

"Your servant is in despair, *Alteza*. You ask of him, to his great regret, more than he can grant. This prisoner is not Jean Biassou's, does not belong to Jean Biassou, and Jean Biassou has nothing to do with him."

"What do you mean?" asked Pierrot, in severe tones. "To whom does he belong then? Is there another power here than you?"

"Alas! yes, *Alteza*."

"Who is it?"

"My army."

The sly and obsequious manner in which Biassou eluded the frank and haughty questions of Pierrot, showed that he was determined to accord only the respect which he was compelled.

"What!" exclaimed Pierrot, "your army! And do you not command it?"

Biassou, reserving his advantage, without giving up, however, his attitude of inferiority, replied with every appearance of sincerity:

"*Sù Alteza* (Does your Highness) really think that we can command men who are in insurrection because they will not obey?"

I cared too little for my life to break the silence, but having seen the day before the despotic authority of Biassou over his men, I could have contradicted his assertions, and laid bare his duplicity. Pierrot continued:

"Ah, well! if you have no authority over your army, and if your soldiers are your masters, what reason can they have for hating your prisoner?"

"Bouckmann has been killed by the government troops," answered Biassou, endeavoring to conceal his sardonic smile under a mask of sorrow, "and my men are determined to avenge upon this white the death of the chief of the Jamaica negroes. They wish to compare trophy against trophy, and that the head of this young officer should serve as a counterpoise to the head of Bouckmann in the scales in which the *bon Giu* weighs both parties."

"How can you suggest these horrible reprisals? Listen to me, Jean Biassou: it is these cruelties that ruin our just cause. Prisoner, as I was in the camp of the whites, from which I have managed to escape, I had not heard of the death of Bouckmann until you told me. It is the just punishment of Heaven for his crime. I will tell you another piece of news. Jeannot, the negro chief who served as a guide to draw the white troops into the ambush of Dompte-Mulatre, Jeannot, also is dead. You know—do not interrupt me, Biassou—that he rivaled you and Bouckmann in his atrocities; now pay attention to this, it was not the thunderbolt of Heaven,

nor the bullets of the whites, that struck him—it was Jean-François himself who ordered this act of justice to be performed.”

Biassou, who had listened with an air of gloomy respect, uttered an exclamation of surprise. At this moment Rigaud entered, bowed respectfully to Pierrot, and whispered in Biassou's ear. The murmur of many voices was heard in the camp. Pierrot continued:

“Yes, Jean-François, who had no fault except a preposterous love of luxury and show, whose carriage with its six horses takes him every day to hear mass at the Grande-Riviere, Jean-François himself has put a stop to the crimes of Jeannot. In spite of the cowardly entreaties of the brigand, who clung in despair to the knees of the Priest of Marmelade, who attended him in his last moments, he was shot beneath the very tree upon which he used to hang his living victims upon iron hooks. Biassou, think of this! Why these massacres which provoke the whites to cruelty? Why use these juggleries which only tend to excite the passions of our unhappy comrades, already too much exasperated? There is at Trou-Coffi a mulatto impostor, called Romaine the Prophet, who is in command of a fanatical band of negroes; he profanes the holy sacraments of the mass, he pretends that he

is in direct communication with the Virgin, from whom he has the oracles by putting his head in the tabernacle: and he urges on his men to murder and pillage in the name of Marie!"

There was a more tender inflection in the voice of Pierrot as he uttered this name than even religious respect would have warranted. I do not know why, but I felt annoyed and irritated at it.

"Ah, well! and you," continued the slave, "you have in your camp some Obi, I hear—some impostor like this Romaine the Prophet. I well know that having to lead an army composed of men from all countries, from all families, of all colors, a common bond is necessary; but can it be found nowhere save in ferocious fanaticism and ridiculous superstition? Believe me, Biassou, the white men are not so cruel as we are. I have seen many planters protect the lives of their slaves; I am not ignorant that in some cases it was not the life of a man, but a sum of money, but at any rate their interest gave them the appearance of a virtue. Do not let us be less merciful than they are, for it is our interest to be so. Will our cause be more holy and more just because we exterminate the women, slaughter the children, and burn the colonists in their own houses? These, however, are

every-day occurrences. Answer me, Biassou: must the traces of our progress be always marked by a line of blood and fire?"

He ceased; the fire of his glance, the accent of his voice, gave to his words a force of conviction and authority which it is impossible for me to imitate. Like a fox caught by a lion, with eyes lowered, Biassou seemed to seek for some means of escape from the power that constrained him. Whilst he vainly sought for a pretext, Rigaud the chief of the negroes of Cayes, who the evening before had calmly watched the horrors that had been perpetrated in his presence, seemed to be shocked at the picture that Pierrot had drawn, and exclaimed with a hypocritical affectation of grief:

"Great heavens! how terrible is a nation when roused to fury."

XLIII.

Meanwhile, the confusion in the camp appeared to increase, to the great uneasiness of Biassou. I heard afterwards that it was caused by the negroes of Morne-Rouge, who hurried from one end of the camp to the other, announcing the return of my liberator, and declaring their intention of supporting him in whatever had been his object in coming to Biassou's camp. Rigaud had informed the generalissimo of this circumstance; and it was the fear of a fatal division in the camp that prompted Biassou to make some sort of concession to the wishes of Pierrot.

"*Alteza*," remarked he, with an air of injured innocence, "if we are hard on the whites, you are severe on us. You are wrong in accusing me of being the cause of the torrent, for it drags us along with it; but *que podria hacer ahora* (what can I do now) that will please you?"

"I have already told you, *Señor Biassou*," answered Pierrot; "let me take this prisoner away with me."

Biassou remained for a few moments silent, as though in deep thought; then putting on an expression of as great frankness as he was able, he answered :

“Come, *Alteza*, I wish to prove to you that I have every desire to please you. Permit me to have two words in private with the prisoner; he shall be free to follow you.”

“Yes, if that is all,” replied Pierrot.

His face, heretofore proud and distrustful, now glistened with delight. He moved away a few paces.

Biassou drew me to one side into a retired part of the cavern, and said in a low voice :

“I can only spare your life upon one condition; you know it; are you ready to fulfill it?”

He showed me Jean-François’ dispatch. A consent appeared to me too humiliating.

“No !” answered I.

“Ah !” repeated he, with his sardonic chuckle. “Always as firm ! You have great confidence, then, in your protector ? Do you know who he is ?”

“I do,” answered I, quickly, “he is a monster, like you, only he is a greater hypocrite !”

He started back in astonishment, seeking to read in my glance if I spoke seriously.

“What !” exclaimed he, “do you not know him then ?”

I replied disdainfully :

“ I only know him as my uncle’s slave, and his name is Pierrot.”

Again Biassou smiled bitterly.

“ Ha ! ha ! that indeed is strange ! he asks for your life and liberty, and you call him a ‘ monster like myself ! ’ ”

“ What matters that ? ” I answered ; “ if I do gain a little liberty, it is not to save my own life, but to take his ! ”

“ What is that ? ” asked Biassou. “ You seem to speak sincerely, and I cannot think that you would trifle with your life. There is something beneath all this that I do not understand. You are protected by a man that you hate ; he pleads for your life, and you wish his death. Besides, it matters little to me. You desire a short spell of freedom—it is all that I can give you. I will leave you free to follow him, but swear to me, by your honor, that you will return to me and reconstitute yourself my prisoner two hours before the sun sets. You are a Frenchman, are you not ? ”

Shall I say it, gentlemen ? Life was a burden to me ; besides I hated the idea of owing it to Pierrot, for every circumstance pointed him out as an object of my just hatred. I do not think for a moment that Biassou (who did not easily permit his prey

to escape him) would allow me to go free except upon his own conditions. I only desired a few hours' liberty which I could devote to discovering the fate of my beloved Marie, before my death. My word, which Biassou, full of confidence in French honor, asked, was a sure and easy way of gaining a day. I gave it.

After having obtained it, the chief approached Pierrot.

"*Alteza*," said Biassou, in obsequious tones, "the white prisoner is at your disposal; you can take him away, he is free to accompany you."

I had never seen so much happiness in Pierrot's eyes.

"Thanks, Biassou!" cried he, extending his hand, "thanks! You have rendered me a service which places me entirely at your disposal. Remain in command of my brethren of Morne-Rouge until my return."

Then he turned towards me.

"Since you are free," cried he, "come!"

And with a strange earnestness he drew me away with him.

Biassou looked after us with blank astonishment, which was even perceptible through the respectful farewell that he took of Pierrot.

XLIV.

I was longing to be alone with Pierrot. His embarrassment when I had questioned him as to the fate of Marie, the ill-concealed tenderness with which he had dared to pronounce her name, had made those feelings of hatred and jealousy which had sprung up in my heart take far deeper root than at the time I saw him bearing away through the flames of Fort Galifet, her whom I could scarcely call my wife. What did I care for the generous indignation with which he had reproved the cruelties of Biassou, the trouble which he had taken to preserve my life, and the curious manner which marked all his words and actions? What cared I for the mystery that appeared to envelop him, which brought him living before my eyes, when I thought I had witnessed his death? Which proved him to be a prisoner of the white troops when I believed that he lay buried in the depths of Grande-Riviere, which changed this slave to a highness, the prisoner to a liberator? Of all these incomprehensible

things the only one which was clear to me, was that Marie had been carried off; a crime to punish, an outrage to avenge. However strange were the events that had passed under my eyes, they were not sufficient to shake my determination, and I had waited with impatience for the moment when I could compel my rival to explain all. That moment had at last arrived.

We had passed through crowds of negroes, who cast themselves on the ground as we passed, and exclaimed in tones of surprise: "*Miraculo! ya no esta prisionero!*" ("A miracle! he is no longer a prisoner!") But whether they referred to Pierrot or to me I did not know. We had gained the outskirts of the camp; as the rocks and trees concealed our view, we lost sight of Biassou's outposts; Rask, in good humor, ran before and then behind; Pierrot followed with rapid strides; I suddenly stopped him.

"Listen to me," cried I, "it is useless to go any farther—the ears that you dreaded can no longer listen to us. Speak, what have you done with Marie?"

Concentrated emotion made my voice tremble. He gazed upon me kindly.

"Always the same question!" said he.

"Yes, always," returned I, furiously; "always! I will put that question to you as you

draw your last breath, or as I utter my last sigh. Where is Marie?"

"Can nothing, then, drive away your doubts of my loyalty? You shall know all soon."

"Soon, monster!" repeated I, "it is now that I want to know. Where is Marie? Where is Marie? Do you hear? Answer, or stake your life against mine. Defend yourself!"

"I have already told you," answered he, sadly, "that that is impossible; the stream will not struggle against its source; my life, which you have three times saved, cannot contend against yours. Besides, even if I wished it the thing is impossible. We have but one dagger between us."

As he spoke, he drew the weapon from his girdle and offered it to me.

"Take it," said he.

I was beside myself, I seized the dagger and placed the point on his breast. He never attempted to move.

"Wretch," cried I, "do not force me to murder you. I will plunge this blade into your heart if you do not at once tell me where my wife is."

He replied without anger:

"You are the master. I implore you with clasped hands to grant me one hour of life, and to follow me. You doubt him who thrice has owed his life to you, and whom you once

called brother? But, listen : if in one hour you still doubt me, you shall be at liberty to kill me. That will be time enough. You see that I do not attempt to resist you. I conjure you in the name of Maria," he added slowly, "of your wife ; give me but another hour, I beg of you, not for my sake, but for yours !"

His voice had an intonation very soft and persuasive. Something seemed to warn me that what he said was true, that it was not interest of his life that had given to his voice this penetrating tenderness, this supplicating sweetness, but that he pleaded for me and not for himself. I yielded to that secret ascendancy which he exercised over me, and of which at that time I should have blushed to have confessed.

"Come," said I, slowly, "I will grant you one hour ; I will follow you."

And I offered him his dagger.

"No," answered he, "keep it ; you still distrust me. But come, let us lose no time."





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George Roux int.

XLV.

Again we started. Rask, who, during our conversation, had frequently tried to make us renew our journey by running toward us, and demanding, with a peculiar look, why we were stopping, bounded joyously before us. We plunged into a virgin forest. At length, after about half an hour, we came out upon a pretty green savanna watered by living springs and bordered by the primeval trees of the forest. Opening on the savanna was a cave, the gray face of which was shrouded by a mass of climbing plants, the clematis, the lianas, and the jasmine. Rask ran towards it barking, but at a sign from Pierrot he became silent, and without a word the latter took me by the hand and led me to the entrance of the cave.

A woman, with her back towards the light, was seated on a mat in this grotto. At the sound of our steps she turned. Friends, it was Marie !

She wore the same white dress that she had on the day of our marriage, and the wreath of orange blossoms was still on her head, the last virginal ornaments of my young wife, which

my hands had not taken from her forehead. She perceived me, recognized me, and with a cry threw herself into my arms, fainting from joy and surprise. I was dismayed.

At her cry an old woman carrying a child in her arms hurried from an inner chamber formed in the depth of the cave. It was Marie's nurse, and my uncle's youngest child. Pierrot hastened to bring some water from the neighboring spring. He threw a few drops in Marie's face ; she speedily recovered ; she opened her eyes.

"Leopold," she exclaimed, "my Leopold!"

"Marie!" cried I, and the rest of my words were stifled in a kiss.

"Not before me, for pity's sake!" cried a voice, in accents of agony.

We looked round, it came from Pierrot. He was there, tortured by seeing our caresses. His bosom heaved, a cold perspiration bedewed his forehead. Every limb quivered. Suddenly he hid his face in his hands, and fled from the grotto repeating in tones of anguish: "Not before me!"

Marie half raised herself in my arms, and following his retreating form with her eyes, exclaimed:

"Great Heaven! Leopold, our happiness seems to trouble him, can it be that he loves me?"

The exclamation of the slave had showed that he was my rival, but Marie's speech proved that he was also my trusty friend.

"Marie," answered I, as the wildest happiness mingled with the deepest regret filled my heart, "Marie, were you ignorant of it?"

"Until this moment I was," answered she, a blush overspreading her beautiful features. "What! he loves me. I never perceived it."

I clasped her to my bosom, in all the madness of happiness.

"I have recovered both wife and friend," I cried; "how happy am I, but how guilty! I doubted him!"

"What!" cried Marie, in surprise, "him! Pierrot! oh, yes, you have indeed been in fault. Twice you owe my life to him, and perhaps more than life," she added, casting down her eyes. "Without him the alligator would have devoured me, without him the negroes . . . it was Pierrot who rescued me from their hands, when they were about to send me to rejoin my unhappy father!"

She broke off her speech with a flood of tears.

"And why," asked I, "did not Pierrot send you back to Cap, to your husband?"

"He tried to do so," replied she, "but it was impossible, compelled as he was to conceal us both from the whites and the blacks,

his position was a most difficult one. Then, too, he was ignorant where you were. Some said that they had seen you killed, but Pierrot assured me that this was not the case, and I was very certain also for something would have warned me; and if you were dead, I should have died at the same time."

"Pierrot brought you here, then?" asked I.

"Yes, my Leopold, this solitary cave is known only to him. At the same time that he rescued me, he saved all that remained alive of our family, my little brother and my old nurse, and hid us here. I assure you the place is very nice; and now since the war which has destroyed the country, now that we are ruined, I should like to live here with you. Pierrot supplied all our wants. He used to come very often; he wore a plume of red feathers on his head. He used to console me by talking of you, and always assured me that I would be restored to you, but for the past three days I have not seen him, and I was beginning to be uneasy, when to-day he came back with you. Poor friend, he had been seeking for you, had he not?"

"Yes," replied I.

"But if so, how can he be in love with me? Are you sure of it?"

"Quite sure, now!" answered I. "It was he who was about to stab me beneath your

window, and spared me lest it should afflict you; it was he who sang the love songs at the pavilion by the river."

"Truly!" exclaimed Marie, with naïve surprise, "he is your rival! and the wicked man with the wild marigolds is good Pierrot! I can hardly believe that. He was so respectful and humble to me, much more so than when he was our slave. It is true that sometimes he looked at me in a strange manner, but I attribute this sadness to our misfortunes. If you could only know with what tenderness he spoke of you, my Leopold. His friendship made him speak of you as much as my love did."

These explanations of Marie enchanted and yet grieved me. I felt how cruelly I had treated the noble-hearted Pierrot, and I felt all the force of his gentle reproach:—"It is not I who am ungrateful!"

At this instant Pierrot returned. His face was dark and gloomy, and he looked like a martyr returning from the place of torture, but yet retaining an air of triumph.

He came towards me, and pointing to the dagger in my belt, said:

"The hour has passed!"

"Hour! What hour?" asked I.

"The one you granted me; it was necessary for me to have so much time allowed me in which to bring you here. Then I conjured

you to spare my life, now I pray you to take it away."

The most tender feelings of the heart, love, gratitude, and friendship, united then, at this moment to torture me. Unable to say a word, but sobbing bitterly, I cast myself at the feet of the slave. He raised me in haste.

"What are you doing?" cried he.

"I pay you the homage which I owe you, but I am no longer worthy of friendship such as yours. Your friendship cannot be pushed so far as to forgive me my ingratitude."

For a time his expression remained stern, he appeared to be undergoing a violent mental contest. He took a step towards me, drew back, he opened his mouth, but remained silent. The struggle was a short one; he opened his arms to embrace me, saying:

"May I now call you brother?"

My only reply was to cast myself on his breast.

After a short pause, he added:

"You are kind, but misfortune has rendered you unjust."

"I have found my brother once again," said I. "I am unfortunate no longer; but I have been very guilty."

"Guilty! brother. I also have been guilty, and more so than you. You are no longer unhappy; but I, I shall be so forever!"

XLVI.

The expression of pleasure which the renewal of our friendship had traced on his features, faded away and an appearance of deep grief once more pervaded them.

“Listen,” said he, coldly; “my father was the King of Kakongo. Each day he sat at the door of his hut and dispensed justice amongst his subjects, and after every judgment, according to the custom of the kings, he drank a full goblet of palm wine. We were happy and powerful. The Europeans came; it was from them that I learnt the accomplishments which you appeared to be surprised at my possessing. Their chief was a Spanish captain; he promised my father territories far greater than those he now ruled over, and white wives; my father followed him with his family . . . Brother, they sold us!”

The breast of the negro rose and fell, his eyes shot forth sparks of fire; and without seeming to know what he did, he broke in his powerful grasp a young medlar tree that stood beside him, then he continued without appearing to address me:

“The master of Kakongo in his turn had a master, and his son toiled as a slave in the furrows of Santo Domingo. They tore the young lion from his father, that they might the more easily tame him; they separated the wife from the husband, to bring more profit by uniting them with others. The little children looked for the mother who nursed them, for the father who bathed them in the torrents. In their place they found cruel masters and a sleeping place shared with the dogs!”

He was silent; his lips moved without speaking, his eyes were fixed and wild, at last he seized me roughly by the arm.

“Brother, do you hear? I have been sold to different masters like a beast of burden. Do you remember the punishment of Ogé? it was on that day that I saw my father. Listen:—he was on the wheel!”

I shuddered. He went on:

“My wife had been prostituted to the whites. Listen, brother, she is dead and demands vengeance. Must I tell you,” continued he, hesitatingly and lowering his eyes, “I was guilty, for I loved another. But let that pass. All my people urged me to deliver and avenge them. Rask brought me their messages. I could do nothing for them, I was fast in your uncle’s prison. The day upon which you obtained my release, I

hurried off to save my children from the power of a cruel master. I arrived.—Brother, the last of the grandchildren of the King of Kakongo had expired under the white man's blows! The others had preceded him."

He interrupted his recital, and asked me coldly :

"Brother, what would you have done?"

This frightful tale froze me with horror. I replied by a threatening gesture. He understood me, and with a bitter smile he continued :

"The slaves rose against their master, and punished the murder of my children. They chose me for their chief. You know the frightful excesses which brought on this rebellion. I heard that your uncle's slaves were on the point of rising. I arrived at Acul on the night upon which the insurrection broke out. You were away. Your uncle had been murdered in his bed. The negroes had already set fire to the plantation. Not being able to restrain them—for in destroying your uncle's property they thought that they were avenging my injuries—I determined to save the survivors of his family. I entered the fort by the breach that I had made. I intrusted your wife's nurse to a faithful negro. I had more trouble in saving your *Maria*. She had hurried to the burning portion of the fort to save the youngest of her

brothers, the sole survivor of the massacre. The blacks surrounded her; they were going to kill her. . . I burst upon them, and ordered them to leave her to my vengeance. They retired. I took your wife in my arms, I intrusted the child to Rask, and I bore them both away to this cavern, of which I alone knew the existence and the access. Brother, such was my crime."

More than ever overwhelmed with gratitude and remorse, I would again have thrown myself at Pierrot's feet. He stopped me with an offended air.

"Come, we must go," said he, a moment after, taking me by the hand, "take your wife, and let us leave this, all of us."

I asked him in surprise whither he was going to lead us.

"To the camp of the whites," answered he. "This retreat is no longer safe. To-morrow at break of day, the whites will attack Biassou's camp; the forest will assuredly be set on fire. Besides, we have no time to lose. Ten heads will have to answer for mine. We can hasten because you are free; we must hasten because I am not."

These words increased my surprise; I pressed him for an explanation.

"Have you not heard that Bug-Jargal was a prisoner?" replied he, impatiently.

“Yes ; but what has Bug-Jargal to do with you?”

In his turn he seemed astonished, and then in a grave voice he answered :

“I am Bug-Jargal.”

XLVII.

I had thought that nothing that related to this extraordinary man could have surprised me. It was not without astonishment that I saw an instant before the slave Pierrot transformed into an African king. My admiration reached its height, when I learned that he was the courageous and magnanimous Bug-Jargal, the chief of the insurgents of Morne-Rouge. I understood at last the respectful demeanor shown by all the rebels, even by Biassou, to Bug-Jargal, the King of Kakongo.

He did not notice the impression that his last words had made upon me.

"They told me," continued he, "that you were a prisoner in Biassou's camp, and I hastened to deliver you."

"Why did you tell me just now that you were not free?"

He glanced inquisitively at me, as though seeking my reason for putting this natural question.

"Listen," answered he. "This morning I was a prisoner in the hands of your friends. I heard a report in the camp that Biassou had

announced his intention of executing, before sunset to-day, a young prisoner named Leopold d'Auverney. They re-enforced my guards. I was informed that my execution would immediately follow yours, and that in the event of escape, ten of my comrades would suffer in my stead. So you see that I have no time to lose."

I still detained him.

"You made your escape then?" asked I.

"How else could I have been here? Was it not necessary to save you? Did I not owe you my life? Come, let us set out. We are an hour's march from the camp of the whites, and about the same distance from that of Biassou. See, the shadows of the cocoanut-trees are lengthening, and their round tops look on the grass like the egg of the giant condor. In three hours the sun will have set. Come, brother, time passes."

In three hours the sun will have set! These simple words froze my blood, like a funereal apparition. They recalled to my mind the fatal promise which bound me to Biassou. Alas! in seeing Marie again, I had not thought of our approaching eternal separation; I had been overwhelmed with my happiness, so much emotion had swept away my memory, and I had forgotten death in my happiness. The words of my friend recalled

everything to my mind. *In three hours the sun will have set!* It would take an hour to reach Biassou's camp. My duty was imperiously prescribed. The villain had my word, and it would never do to give him the chance of despising what he seemed still to put trust in—the honor of a Frenchman. The alternative was terrible. I chose that which was right; but I acknowledge, gentlemen, I hesitated a moment. Was I to blame?

XLVIII.

At last, with a deep sigh, I placed one hand in that of Bug-Jargal, and the other in that of Marie, who observed with anxiety the sadness that had overspread my features.

“ Bug-Jargal,” said I, struggling with emotion, “ I intrust to you the only being in the world that I love more than you—Marie. Return to the camp without me, for I cannot follow you.”

“ My God !” exclaimed Marie, hardly able to breathe, “ some new misfortune !”

Bug-Jargal trembled. A look of mingled sorrow and surprise passed over his eyes.

“ Brother, what is this that you say ?”

The terror that had seized upon Marie at the thought of the coming misfortune which her love for me had almost caused her to divine, made me determined to hide from her and to spare her the heart-rending good-byes. I leaned towards Bug-Jargal’s ear, and said, in a low voice :

“ I am a prisoner. I swore to Biassou that two hours before sunset I would once more

place myself in his power; in fact, I have promised to die!"

He jumped up angrily; his voice became piercing.

"The monster! This then was his motive for a secret interview with you:—it was to bind you with this promise. I ought to have distrusted this wicked Biassou. Why did I not foresee some treachery? He is not a black, he is a mulatto."

"What is this? What treachery? What promise?" said Marie, in an agony of terror. "Who is this Biassou?"

"Silence, silence," repeated I, in a low voice, to Bug-Jargal; "do not let us alarm Marie."

"Good," answered he in a sad voice. "But why did you consent to this promise? why did you give it? how could you consent?"

"I thought you were a wretch, that Marie was lost to me. What was life to me?"

"But a simple promise cannot bind you to this brigand."

"I gave my word of honor."

He did not seem to understand me.

"Your word of honor, what is that? You did not drink out of the same cup; you have not broken a ring together, or a branch of the red-blossomed maple?"

"No."

“Well, then, what did you say then? What binds you to him?”

“My honor!” I replied.

“I do not know what that signifies; nothing pledges you to Biassou. Come with us!”

“I cannot, my brother, I have promised.”

“No! you have not promised,” cried he, angrily; then raising his voice: “Sister, join with me and entreat your husband not to leave us. He wishes to return to the negro camp from which I rescued him, on the plea that he has promised his life to their chief Biassou.”

“What have you done?” cried I.

It was too late to stay the effects of the generous impulse that had prompted him to endeavor to save the life of his rival by the help of her he loved. Marie cast herself into my arms with a cry of anguish. Her hands clasped my neck, and she hung upon my breast, speechless and breathless.

“Oh, what does he say, my Leopold?” murmured she, feebly. “Is it not true that he is mistaken, and that he is deceiving me? It is not immediately after our reunion that you wish to leave me, and leave me to die? Answer me quickly or I shall die. You have no right to throw away your life, for you have given it to me. You would not leave me, never to see me again!”

“Marie,” answered I, “do not believe it. I am going to leave, truly ; it is necessary ; but we shall meet again, in another place.”

“In another place ! in another place !” she asked, in faltering accents, “Where ?”

“In heaven,” I answered ; for to this angel I could not lie.

Again she fainted, but this time it was from grief. The hour was passing ; my resolution was taken. I placed her in the arms of Bug-Jargal, whose eyes were full of tears.

“Nothing can keep you back, then,” said he ; “I will add nothing to that which you see. How can you resist Maria ? For one word she has spoken I would have sacrificed the world, and you cannot even give up death for her.”

“Honor !” answered I. “Farewell, Bug-Jargal, farewell, brother ; I bequeath her to you.”

He grasped my hand ; he was pensive, and appeared hardly to understand me.

“Brother,” said he, “in the camp of the whites there is one of your relations, I will give her over to him ; for my part I cannot accept your legacy.”

He pointed to a rocky crag which towered high above the adjacent country.

“Do you see that rock ? when the signal of your death shall float from it, it will promptly

be answered by the volley that announces mine. Good-bye."

Without stopping to consider these last words, I embraced him; I pressed a kiss upon the pale face of Marie who was slowly recovering under the attentions of her nurse, and fled precipitately, fearing that another look or word would shake my resolution.

XLIX.

I ran away, I plunged into the depths of the forest, following the tracks that we had left there, and not daring to cast a last glance behind me. To stifle the thoughts which oppressed me, I dashed, without a moment's pause, through thickets and savannas, until I reached the crest of a rock from which I could see the camp of Biassou, with its lines of wagons and huts swarming with life, and looking like an ant-hill of blacks. There, I halted. I felt that I had reached the end of my journey, and my life at the same time. Fatigue and emotion had weakened my powers; I leaned against a tree to save myself from falling, and allowed my eyes to wander over the picture which spread itself before me in the fatal savanna, which was to be my place of execution.

Up to this moment I had imagined that I had tasted the cup of bitterness and gall, but I had not known the most cruel of all misfortunes, that of being constrained by a moral force to voluntarily renounce life when it appeared most sweet. Some hours before I cared not for the world. I did not wish to





live, extreme despair is a simulation of death which makes the reality more earnestly desired. But I had been brought out of this despair. Marie had been restored to me ; my past had become my future, and all my overshadowed hopes had beamed forth more gloriously than ever, and again had a new life, a life of youth, and love, and enchantment, showed gloriously upon the horizon. I was ready to enter upon this life ; everything invited me to it ; no material obstacle, no visible hindrance ; I was free, I was happy, and yet I must die. I had made but one step into paradise, and a hidden duty compelled me to retrace it. Death has but few terrors for the crushed and broken spirit, but how keen and icy is his hand when it grasps the heart which has just begun to live and revel in the joys of life. I have tried it. I had emerged from the tomb ; I had for a moment enjoyed the greatest delights of life, love, friendship, and liberty, and now the door of the sepulchre was again opened, it was necessary to enter the tomb again !

L.

When the first bitter pang of grief had passed, a kind of fury took possession of me ; I entered the valley with a rapid step, I felt the necessity of shortening the suspense. I presented myself at the negro outpost. They appeared surprised and refused to permit me to pass. Strange ! I was nearly obliged to entreat them. At last two of them seized me and led me before Biassou.

I entered the grotto of this chief. He was engaged in examining the springs of various instruments of torture with which he was surrounded. At the noise my guard made in introducing me he turned his head ; my presence did not seem to surprise him.

“ Do you see these ? ” asked he, displaying the horrible engines which lay before him.

I remained calm ; I knew the cruel nature of this *hero of humanity*, and I was determined to endure to the end without flinching.

“ Léogri was lucky in being only hung, was he not ? ” asked he, with his sardonic sneer.

I gazed upon him with cold disdain, and did not reply.

“Notify his reverence the chaplain,” said he to an aide-de-camp.

We both remained silent a moment, looking at each other. I observed him; he watched me.

Just then Rigaud entered; he seemed agitated, and whispered a few words to the general.

“Summon the chiefs of my army,” said Biassou, calmly.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, the different chiefs in their strange equipments, were assembled in the grotto. Biassou rose.

“Listen, *amigos*, the whites plan to attack us here at daybreak. Our position is a bad one; we must quit it. We will march at sunset and gain the Spanish frontier. Macaya, you and your negroes will form the advance guard. Padrejan, spike the guns which were taken at Pralato; they cannot be taken into the mountains. The brave men of Croix-des-Bouquets will follow Macaya. Toussaint will come next with the blacks from Léogane and Trou. If the *griots* or the *griotes* make any disturbance, I will hand them over to the executioner of the army. Lieutenant-Colonel Cloud will distribute the English muskets that were disembarked at Cape Cabron, and will lead the formerly free half-breeds through the

by-way of La Vista. Slaughter any prisoner that may remain. Destroy the ammunition, and poison the arrows. Throw three tons of arsenic into the wells, from where they get the water for the camp; the colonists will take it for sugar, and drink without distrust. The troops from Limbé, Dondon and Acul, will march after Cloud and Toussaint. Block up the roads to the savanna with rocks, fill the roads with sharpshooters; and set fire to the forest. Rigaud, you will remain with us; Candi, summon my guard about me. The negroes of Morne-Rouge will form the rear-guard, and will not evacuate the savanna until sunrise."

He leaned over to Rigaud, and whispered:

"They are Bug-Jargal's negroes; if they are killed, '*Muerta la tropa, muerte el gefe!*' (Dead the band, the chief will die.) Go, *hermanos*," he added, rising. "Candi will bring you the instructions."

The chiefs retired.

"General," remarked Rigaud, "we ought to send that dispatch of Jean-François', our affairs are going badly; it would stop the advance of the whites."

Biassou drew it hastily from his pocket.

"I agree with you, but there are so many faults of grammar, as they say, that they would laugh." He presented the papers to

me. "Listen, will you save your life? My kindness gives you still another chance. Help me to correct this letter; I will dictate to you my idea: you write it in the *style of the whites*."

I shook my head. He seemed impatient.

"Do you mean no?" asked he.

"No," I replied.

He persisted.

"Reflect well."

And his look seemed to attract mine to the instrument of torture with which he played.

"It is because I have reflected that I refuse," replied I. "You are alarmed for the safety of yourself and your men; you count upon this letter to the Assembly to delay the march and the vengeance of the whites. I do not desire to retain a life which may perhaps have saved yours. Let my execution commence."

"Ha! ha! *muchacho!* (boy)," exclaimed Biassou, touching the instruments of torture with his foot, "it seems to me that you are growing familiar with these! I am sorry, but I have not the time to try them on you. Our position is dangerous; we must get out of it quickly. Ah! so you refuse to act as my secretary? Well, you are right, for I would not have allowed you to live. I have promised you to his reverence the chaplain. I would not permit any one to live who holds Biassou's secrets!"

He turned to the Obi, who just then entered.

"Good father, is your guard ready?"

The latter made a sign in the affirmative.

"Have you taken it from amongst the negroes of Morne-Rouge? They are the only ones who are not occupied in preparations for departure."

The Obi answered by a second sign.

Then Biassou pointed out to me the black flag which I had before remarked in a corner of the grotto.

"That will show your friends when the time comes to give your epaulette to your lieutenant. You see I ought to be moving already. By the way, you have come from your walk, how do you like the neighborhood?"

"I noticed that there were enough trees upon which to hang you and all your band," I replied coldly.

"Ah," retorted he, with his hideous laugh, "there is one place that you have not seen, but with which the *bon per* will make you acquainted. Adieu, young captain, good-night to Léogri."

He saluted me with a chuckle that reminded me of the hiss of the rattlesnake, made a gesture, and turned his back to me, and the negroes dragged me away. The veiled Obi followed us, his rosary in hand.





LI.

I walked between my guards without offering any resistance. It is true that it would have been useless. We ascended the brow of a hill situated to the west of the savanna where we rested a moment. I cast a last lingering look at the setting sun which would never rise again for me. My guards mounted, I followed them. We descended into a little valley, which, under any other circumstances would have enchanted me. A stream ran through it and communicated to the soil a fruitful humidity; this stream fell at the end of the dale into one of those blue lakes which abound in the hills of Santo Domingo. How often, in happier days I have sat and dreamed on the borders of these beautiful lakes in the twilight hour, when their deep azure changed into a sheet of silver, or when the reflections of the first stars sowed the surface with golden spangles! This hour passes as quickly as it comes, but it must pass! How lovely this valley appeared to me! There are the plane-trees and maples of gigantic growth; closely grown thickets of *mauritias*,

a kind of palm, which allows no other vegetation to flourish beneath its shade, date-trees, magnolias with their large calyx, the tall catalpa, showing their polished and exquisitely chiseled leaves, among the golden buds of the ebony-trees. The Canadian *odier* (maple), mingled its yellow flowers with the blue aureolas of that species of the wild honeysuckle which the negroes call *coali*. Thick curtains of luxurious creepers concealed the bare sides of the neighboring rocks. There arose from the virgin soil a soft perfume, such as the first man may have inhaled among the first roses of Eden. We continued our way along the footpath traced on the brink of the torrent. I was surprised to notice that this path closed abruptly at the foot of a tall peak, below which I noticed a natural archway, from which flowed a rapid torrent. A dull roar, and an impetuous wind issued from this natural arch. The negroes took a path to the left which led into a cavern which seemed to be the bed of a torrent that had long been dried up. A vault presented itself, half shut up by brambles, holly, and wild thorns, which crossed it. A noise like that in the arch in the valley was heard under this vault. The blacks dragged me there. As I took the first step into the cavern, the Obi came to my side, and whispered in a strange voice, "This is

what I have to predict now ; only one of us two shall go out of this vault and pass again by this road." I disdained to make any reply. We advanced farther into the gloom. The noise became louder ; we could not hear footsteps. I fancied that this noise was produced by a waterfall ; I was not deceived.

After moving through the darkness ten minutes, we found ourselves on a kind of internal platform formed by nature in the centre of the mountain. The larger portion of this semicircular platform was inundated by a torrent which burst from the interior of the mountain with a terrible din. Above this subterranean hall the roof rose into the shape of a dome, covered with moss of a yellowish hue. This vault was traversed by a large opening through which the daylight penetrated, and the sides of the crevasse were fringed with green trees, gilded just now by rays of the sun. At the northern extremity of the platform the torrent fell with a frightful noise into a deep abyss, over which appeared to float, without being able to illuminate its depths, a feeble portion of the light which came through the aperture in the roof. Over this precipice hung an old tree whose topmost branches were filled with the foam of the waterfall, and whose knotty roots pierced the rock one or two feet below the brink.

This tree, whose top and roots were both swept by the torrent, and hung over the abyss like a skeleton arm, was destitute of foliage, so that I could not distinguish its species. It had a strange and weird appearance; the humidity which saturated its roots prevented it from dying, whilst the force of the cataract tore off its new branches and left only the old.

LII.

The negroes stopped at this terrible spot, and I knew that I was going to die.

It was in this abyss, then, that was to be sunk all my hopes in this world. The image of the happiness which but a few hours before I had voluntarily renounced, brought to my heart a feeling of regret, almost one of remorse. All prayers were unworthy of me; an expression of regret escaped me however.

"Friends," said I to the negroes who surrounded me, "do you know that it is a sad thing to die at twenty years of age, when one is full of life and strength, when one is loved by one whom in your turn you adore, and you leave behind you eyes that will weep until they are closed forever."

A horrible burst of laughter hailed my expression of regret. It came from the little Obi. This species of evil spirit, this impentrate being, approached me roughly.

"Ha, ha, ha! you regret life then, *Labado sea Dios!* My only fear was that death would have no terrors for you!"

It was the same voice, the same laugh that had so often before baffled my conjectures.

"Wretch!" exclaimed I, "who are you then?"

"You are going to learn," replied he, with a terrible accent. Then, thrusting aside the silver sun that concealed his brown chest: "Look!"

I leaned toward him. Two names were written in whitish letters on the hairy chest of the Obi, showing but too clearly the hideous and ineffaceable brand of the heated iron put on the chests of slaves. One of these names was *Effingham*, the other was that of my uncle and myself, *d'Auverney*! I was struck dumb with surprise.

"Well, Leopold d'Auverney," asked the Obi, "does not your name tell you mine?"

"No," answered I, astonished to hear the man name me, and seeking to recall him to my mind. "These two names were only to be found thus united upon the chest of a fool. But he is dead, the poor dwarf, and besides, he was devotedly attached to us. You cannot be Habibrah!"

"The same!" shrieked he, and casting aside the blood-stained *gorras* (cap), he undid his veil. The deformed face of the household dwarf was before my eyes; but a threatening and sinister expression had usurped the

half-imbecile smile which was formerly eternally imprinted on his features.

"Great God!" exclaimed I, overwhelmed with surprise, "do all the dead, then, come back to life! It is Habibrah, my uncle's fool!"

The dwarf put his hand on his dagger and said hoarsely:

"His fool,—and his murderer."

I recoiled in horror.

"His murderer! Villain—was it thus that you repaid his kindness?" He interrupted me.

"His kindness! say his outrages."

"What!" I again cried, "was it you, villain, who struck the fatal blow!"

"It was," he replied, with a terrible expression. "I plunged my knife so deeply into his heart that he had hardly time to cast aside sleep before death claimed him. He cried out feebly, 'Come to me, Habibrah!' *I was with him.*"

The cold-blooded manner in which he narrated the murder disgusted me.

"Wretch! cowardly assassin! You forgot, then, all his kindness, that you ate near his table, and slept at the foot of his bed . . ."

"Like a dog," interrupted Habibrah, roughly, "*como un perro!* Come! I remembered too much of what you call his kindness, but which I looked upon as insults. I took vengeance upon him, and I am going to take

vengeance on you. Listen. Do you think that because I am a mulatto, a deformed dwarf, that I am not a man? Ah, I have a soul stronger, deeper, and bolder than the one that I am about to set free from your girlish frame! I was given to your uncle as if I had been a pet monkey. I served his pleasures, I amused him, whilst he despised me. He loved me, do you say; I had a place in his heart; yes, between his ape and his parrot. I found a better place there with my dagger!"

I shuddered.

"Yes," continued the dwarf, "it was I, it is I! Look me in the face, Leopold d'Auverney! You have often laughed at me, now you shall tremble. Ah, you recall the honest predilection of your uncle for him whom he called his fool! What predilection, *Bon Dieu!* If I entered the room a thousand shouts of contemptuous laughter greeted me, my appearance, my deformities, my features, my ridiculous costume—all the deplorable infirmities of my nature, furnished food for laughter to your accursed uncle and his accursed friends. I could not remain silent, it was necessary, *O rabia!* It was necessary for me to join in the laughter which I provoked! I foam with rage whilst I think of it. Answer me: do you think that after such humiliations I could feel anything but the

deadliest hatred for the creature that inflicted them upon me? Do you not think that they were a thousand times harder to endure than the toil in the burning sun, the fetters, and the whip of the driver, which were the lot of the other slaves? Do you not think that they would cause ardent, implacable, and eternal hatred to spring up in the heart of man as lasting as the accursed brand which degrades my chest? Oh! after having suffered so long, that my vengeance should be so short! Why could I not make my tyrant suffer all the torments which I have endured for so many years? Why could he not before his death know the bitterness of wounded pride, and feel what burning traces tears of shame leave upon a face condemned to wear a perpetual smile? Alas! it is too hard to have waited so long for the hour of vengeance, and then only to find it in a dagger-thrust! Had he but only known the hand that struck him it would have been something! but I was too eager to hear his dying groan; I drove in the knife too quickly; he died without having recognized me, and my eagerness baulked my vengeance! This time at least, it should be more complete. You see me, do you not? you may be unable to recognize me in my character. You have always been in the habit

of seeing me laughing and joyous, but now nothing prevents me from letting my true nature appear in my eyes, I do not resemble my former self. You only knew my mask; look upon my real face!"

It was horrible.

"Monster!" exclaimed I, "you deceive yourself; there is still something of buffoonery in the atrocity of your face and heart."

"Do not speak of atrocity!" retorted Habibrah, "think of your uncle"

"Wretch," returned I indignantly, "if he was cruel it was at your instigation. You, to pretend to pity the position of the poor slaves—why, then, did you not exert all your influence to make their master treat them less harshly? Why did you never intercede in their favor?"

"I would not have done so for the world, I hinder a white man from blackening his soul by an act of cruelty? No! no! I urged him to inflict more and more punishment upon his slaves, so as to hurry on the revolt, so that the excessive oppression would at last bring vengeance. In seeming to injure my brethren I was serving them."

I was confounded at such a cunning act of diplomacy.

"Well," continued the dwarf, "do you believe now that I knew how to conceive and

to execute? What do you still think of Habibrah the buffoon? What do you think of your uncle's fool?"

"Finish what you have begun so well," replied I. "Let me die, but do not delay!"

He commenced to walk up and down the platform, rubbing his hands.

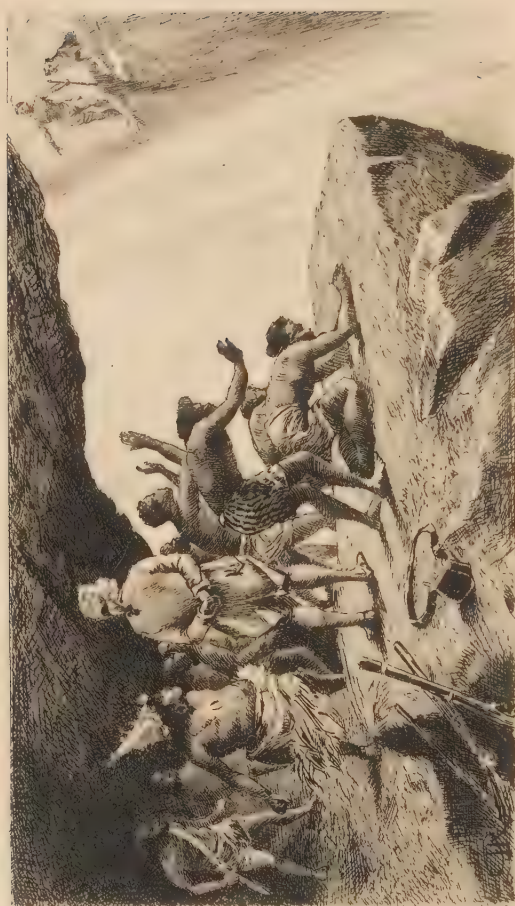
"And suppose I wish for delay? Suppose that it does my heart good to watch you in the agonies of suspense? You see Biassou owed me my share in the last plunder. When I saw you in the camp of the negroes, I asked for your life. He granted it willingly, and now you are mine; I am amusing myself with you. Soon you will follow the stream of the cataract into the abyss; be calm; but before doing so let me tell you that I have discovered the spot where your wife is concealed, and it was I that advised Biassou to set the forest on fire; and the work, I imagine, is already begun. Thus your family will be swept from the face of the earth. Your uncle perished by steel, you will perish by water, and your Marie by fire!"

"Villain! villain!" I exclaimed, and I made an effort to throw myself on him.

He turned to the negroes.

"Come, bind him!" cried he; "he precipitates his hour."

Then in silence the negroes commenced to bind me with the cords that they had carried with them. Suddenly I fancied that I heard the distant barking of a dog, but this sound might be only an illusion caused by the noise of the cascade. The negroes had finished binding me, and placed me on the brink of the abyss which was to devour me. The dwarf folding his arms, gazed at me with a sinister expression of joy. I lifted my eyes to the opening in the roof so as to avoid the triumphant expression of malice painted on his countenance, and to take one last look at the blue sky. At that instant the barking was stronger, more distinctly heard. The enormous head of Rask appeared at the opening. I trembled. The dwarf exclaimed: "Hurry!" The negroes, who had not heard the barking, prepared to throw me into the abyss.



Thyssenriér es

G. Roux inv.



LIII.

“Comrades!” cried a voice of thunder.

All turned; it was Bug-Jargal. Standing on the edge of the opening; a crimson plume floating on his head.

“Comrades,” repeated he, “stop!”

The negroes prostrated themselves. He continued:

“I am Bug-Jargal.”

The negroes struck the earth with their heads, uttering cries the meaning of which was difficult to understand.

“Unbind the prisoner,” commanded the chief.

Then the dwarf appeared to recover from the stupor into which the sudden appearance of Bug-Jargal had thrown him. He seized the arms of the negroes who were preparing to cut my cords. “How, what is the meaning of this?” cried he. *Que quiere decir eso?*

Then, raising his head toward Bug-Jargal:

“Chief of the Morne-Rouge, what are you doing here?”

Bug-Jargal replied:

“I have come to command my brothers!”

"Yes," answered the dwarf, with concentrated passion, "these are the negroes of Morne-Rouge! But by what right," added he, raising his voice, "do you interfere with my prisoner?"

The chief answered:

"I am Bug-Jargal!"

The negroes struck the ground with their foreheads.

"Bug-Jargal," continued Habibrah, "cannot contravene the orders of Biassou. This white man was given to me by Biassou. I desire his death, and die he shall. *Vosotros*," said he to the negroes, "obey! Throw him into the abyss."

At the voice of the all-powerful Obi, the negroes rose to their feet and took a step towards me. I thought all was lost.

"Unbind the prisoner!" cried Bug-Jargal.

In an instant I was free. My surprise equaled the fury of the Obi. He attempted to throw himself upon me. The negroes interfered. Then he burst out into imprecations and threats.

"*Demonios! rabia! inferno de mi alma!* (wretches! you refuse to obey me!) Do you not recognize *mi voz?* Why did I lose *el tiempo* listening to *este maldicho?* I ought to have him hurled without delay to the fishes of *del baratro*. By wishing to make my vengeance more complete I have

lost it. *O rabia de Satan! Escuchate, vosotros!* if you do not obey me, if you do not hurl this miserable white into the abyss, I will curse you, your hair shall grow white; the mosquitoes and sandflies shall eat you up alive; your legs and your arms shall bend like reeds, your breath shall burn your throat like red-hot sand; you shall die soon, and after your death, your spirits shall be compelled to turn a millstone as big as a mountain, in the moon where it is always cold."

The scene produced on me a singular effect. The only one of my color, in a damp and gloomy cavern surrounded by negroes with the aspect of demons, balanced as it were upon the edge of a bottomless gulf, and every now and then threatened by a deformed dwarf, by a hideous sorcerer upon whose striped garments and pointed cap the fading light shone faintly, yet protected by a tall negro who was standing at the only point from which daylight could be seen, it appeared to me that I was at the gates of hell, awaiting the conflict between my good and evil angels, to result in the salvation or the destruction of my soul, as though assisting at a conflict between the good and evil spirits.

The negroes appeared to be terrified at the threats of the Obi. He endeavored to profit by their indecision, and cried:

"Obey me, I desire the death of the white man, he shall die."

Bug-Jargal replied solemnly:

"He shall live! I am Bug-Jargal. My father was the King of Kakongo, who dispensed justice at the gate of his palace."

Again the negroes cast themselves upon the ground.

The chief continued :

"Brethren! go and tell Biassou not to unfurl upon the mountain-top the black banner which should announce to the whites the signal of this man's death, for he was the saviour of Bug-Jargal's life, and Bug-Jargal wills that he should live!"

They rose. Bug-Jargal threw his red plume on the ground before them. The chief of the guard crossed his arms on his breast, and picked it up with every show of respect; then they left the cavern without a word. The Obi followed them down the subterranean avenue.

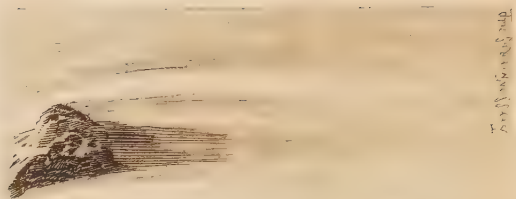
I will not attempt to describe to you, gentlemen, the situation in which I found myself. I fixed my eyes, wet with tears, upon Pierrot, who gazed upon me with a singular expression of love and tenderness.

"God be praised," said he, "you are saved. Brother, return the way you came. You will meet me again in the valley."

He waved his hand to me and disappeared.



G. Rona. inv.



G. Rona. inv.

LIV.

Eager to arrive at the appointed meeting-place, and to learn by what fortunate means my saviour had been enabled to make his appearance at so opportune a moment, I prepared to leave this frightful cavern. However, new dangers were reserved for me. The instant I prepared to enter the subterranean passage an unexpected obstacle presented itself in my path. It was Habibrah ! The revengeful Obi had not in reality followed the negroes as I had believed ; he had concealed himself behind a rocky projection of the cave, waiting for a propitious moment for his vengeance. This moment had come. The dwarf laughed bitterly as he showed himself. I was alone, disarmed ; a dagger, the same that he was in the habit of using for a crucifix, shone in his right hand. At the sight of it I recoiled involuntarily.

“ Ha, ha, *maldicho!* (accursed one!) did you think to escape me then ? But the fool is not less of a fool than you ! I have you, and this time there shall be no delay. Your friend Bug-Jargal shall not wait for you long.

You shall soon be at the meeting-place in the valley, but it will be the wave of the cataract that shall bear you there."

As he spoke he dashed at me with uplifted weapon.

"Monster," cried I, retreating to the platform, "just now you were nothing but an executioner, now you are a murderer!"

"I am an avenger," returned he, grinding his teeth.

At this instant I was on the edge of the precipice; he endeavored to hurl me over with a blow of his dagger. I avoided it. His foot slipped on the treacherous moss which covered the rocks; he rolled into the slope polished and rounded by the constant flow of water. "A thousand devils!" he roared. He had fallen into the abyss.

I have already mentioned that the roots of the old tree projected through the crevices of the rocks, a little below the edge of the precipice. In his fall the dwarf struck against these, his striped petticoat caught in them, he grasped at them as a last hope of safety, and clung to them with extraordinary energy. His pointed bonnet fell from his head; to maintain his position he had to let go his dagger, and the dagger of the assassin and the bonnet of the fool disappeared together in the depths of the abyss.

Habibrah, suspended over the terrible gulf, strove vainly to regain the platform, but his short arms could not reach the rocky edge, and he broke his nails in useless efforts to obtain a hold on the muddy surface of the rocks which sloped down into the terrible abyss. He howled with rage.

The slightest push on my part would have been sufficient to hurl him to destruction; but it would have been an act of cowardice, and I did not think of it for a moment. This moderation surprised him. Thanking Heaven for the mercies it had sent me, I determined to abandon him to his fate, and was about to leave the subterranean chamber when suddenly I heard the dwarf, in a voice broken with fear, and which appeared to come from the depths of the abyss.

“Master,” cried he, “master, do not go, for pity’s sake! in the name of the *bon Giu* do not leave me to die guilty and penitent, a human creature, that it is in your power to save. Alas! my strength is failing me; the roots bend, and slip through my fingers, the weight of my body drags me down—I must let go, or my arms will break! Alas, master, the fearful gulf boils beneath me! *Nombre santo de Dios!* Have you no pity for the poor fool? He has been very guilty, but prove that the white men are better than

take a companion with me to feed the fishes of the lake."

"Ah, traitor!" cried I, struggling with all my strength. "Is it thus that you serve me when I was trying to save you from peril?"

"Yes," replied he. "I know that we could have saved ourselves together, but I would rather that you should perish with me. I prefer your death rather than my life. Come down!"

At this moment, his brown muscular hands grasped mine with unexpected strength; his eyes blazed; his mouth foamed; his strength, the loss of which he had before so piteously bewailed, had returned to him, increased a thousandfold by the hope of revenge: his feet were planted like two perpendicular levers on a ledge of rocks, and he struggled like a tiger against the root which, entangled in his clothes, supported him in spite of himself; for he was endeavoring with all his might to shake himself free, so as to bring all his weight to bear on me, and to drag me more quickly. He stopped several times in his rage to bite me, whilst his hideous features were rendered more terrible by their expression of satanic frenzy. One might say the demon of the cave was seeking to drag down a victim to his abode of gloom and darkness.

One of my knees was fortunately planted in a groove of the rock ; my arm was wrapped round a tree which held me ; and I strove against the efforts of the dwarf with all the strength that the feeling of self-preservation could give me at such a moment. Every now and then I drew a long breath, and shouted with all my strength " Bug-Jargal ! " But the roar of the cascade, and the distance that he must be off, gave me but faint hopes of my voice reaching him.

Meanwhile, the dwarf, who had not anticipated so vigorous a resistance on my part, redoubled his efforts. I began to grow weak, though in reality the struggle had not taken so long as the narration of it. A violent pain paralyzed my arm ; my sight grew dim, bright sparks flashed before my eyes, a buzzing sound filled my ears, I heard the creaking of the root as it bent, the laugh of the monster, and it seemed to me that the abyss rose, eager to engulf me.

Before abandoning all hope I made a last effort ; collecting my exhausted forces, I once again shouted : " Bug-Jargal. " A loud bark replied to me. I recognized Rask. I glanced upwards—Bug-Jargal and his dog were at the edge of the crevice. I do not know whether he had heard my voice or whether some apprehension had made him turn. He saw my danger.

“Hold on!” cried he.

Habibrah, fearing that I might yet be saved, foamed with rage, and cried :

“Come down! then come down!” and renewed the attack with almost supernatural vigor.

At this moment, my weakened arm lost its hold of the tree. All seemed over with me, when I felt myself seized from behind. It was Rask! At a sign from his master he had leaped down on the platform, and seized me by the skirts of my uniform with his powerful teeth. This unlooked-for aid saved me. Habibrah had exhausted all his strength in a last convulsive effort; I put forth all mine to withdraw my hand. His cramped and swollen fingers at last let go of me. The root, so long bent, broke under his weight; and, whilst Rask gave me a violent pull from behind, the wretched dwarf disappeared in the foam of the cascade, hurling a curse at me which was swallowed up with him in the whirl of waters.

Such was the terrible end of my uncle's fool.

LV.

This frightful scene, the furious struggle, his terrible end, exhausted me. I was almost without sense or power of motion. The voice of Bug-Jargal restored me to myself.

"Brother!" cried he, "hasten to leave here! In half an hour the sun will have set. I will meet you in the valley. Follow Rask."

The words of my friend restored hope, strength, and courage. I rose to my feet. The great dog ran rapidly down the subterranean passage; I followed him; his bark guiding me through the darkness. After a time I saw a streak of light, and in a few minutes I gained the entrance, and breathed more freely. As I left the damp and gloomy vault behind me, I recalled to my mind the prediction of the dwarf, and its fatal fulfillment.

"One only of us shall return by this road."

His attempt had failed, but the prophecy had been realized.

LVI.

Down in the valley I again saw Bug-Jargal; I threw myself into his arms, but I had so many questions to put to him that I could not find words in which to express them.

“Listen,” said he. “Your wife, my sister, is safe, I have left her in a camp of the white men, with a relative of yours who was in command of the outposts; I wish to again constitute myself a prisoner, lest they should execute the ten prisoners whose lives were security for my reappearance. Your relative told me to return, and, if possible, to prevent your execution, that the ten negroes should not be executed until Biassou should announce the fact by displaying a black flag on one of the highest peaks of the mountains. Then I returned to do my best. Rask led me to where you were and I arrived in time—thanks be to Heaven. You will live, and so shall I.”

He extended his hand to me, adding—

“Brother, are you satisfied?”

I again clasped him in my arms; I entreated him not to leave me again, but to remain with

the white troops ; I promised him a commission in the colonial army. But he interrupted me with an angry air.

“ Brother,” asked he, “ do I propose to you to join my army ? ”

I remained silent ; I felt that I had been in the wrong. He added with gayety—

“ Come, let us hurry to the camp to reassure your wife.”

This proposal was what I most ardently desired ; I was overcome with joy ; we started. The negro knew the way ; he took the lead ; Rask followed us.

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Here d’Auverney stopped suddenly, and cast a gloomy look around him. Perspiration in large beads covered his forehead. He covered his face with his hands. Rask looked at him with an air of uneasiness.

“ Yes, it is thus that you look at me ! ” murmured he.

An instant afterwards he arose, violently agitated, and left the tent. The sergeant and the dog accompanied him.

LVII.

“I will wager,” said Henri, “that we are nearing the end of the tragedy ! I should really feel sorry if anything happened to Bug-Jargal ; what a famous fellow !”

Paschal removed from his lips the mouth of his wicker-covered flask, and said :

“I would have given a dozen hampers of port to have seen the cocoanut which he emptied at a draught.”

Alfred, who was gently humming the air of a love-song, interrupted himself and asked Lieutenant Henri to fasten his aguilettes ; then he added :

“The negro interests me very much. Only I have not yet dared to ask d’Auverney if he knew the air of *la Hermosa Padilla*.” (“Beautiful Padilla.”)

“Biassou is still more remarkable,” continued Paschal, “his tar-water may not be very fine, but at least the fellow knows what it is to be a Frenchman. If I had been his prisoner I would have pawned my moustache with him for a few piastres, as the Portuguese captain did with the town of Goa. I

declare that my creditors are more pitiless than Biassou."

"By the way, captain, here are four louis that I owe you," cried Henri, throwing his purse to Paschal.

The captain looked in astonishment at his generous debtor, who, with more justice, could have called himself creditor. Henri hastily continued :

"Look, gentlemen, what do you think of the story the captain told?"

"Honestly," said Alfred, "I have not listened very attentively, but I certainly had expected something more interesting from d'Auverney's lips. And then it was a romance in prose, and I do not like romances in prose; what air do you sing it to? In fact, the story of Bug-Jargal has bored me a little. It is too long."

"You are right," returned Paschal, the aide-de-camp. "If I had not had my pipe and my bottle, I should have passed a dreary evening. Besides, there were a lot of absurdities in it. How can we believe for instance, that that little thief of a sorcerer, I have forgotten his name . . . *Habit-bas!* do you think he would have drowned himself for the sake of destroying his enemy?"

Henri interrupted him smiling :

“In water especially! is it not so, Captain Paschal? What struck me more than anything was, that every time d’Auverney mentioned the name of Bug-Jargal his lame dog lifted up his head.”

“As for that,” interrupted Paschal, “he did precisely the contrary to what I have seen the good old women of Celadas do when the priest pronounced the name of Jesus; I entered the church with a dozen cuirassiers”

The sound of the sentry presenting arms warned them of d’Auverney’s return. All remained silent. He walked up and down for a few moments with folded arms and in silence. Old Thaddeus, who was seated in a corner, pretended to be caressing Rask, so that the captain would not perceive his uneasiness.

At last d’Auverney continued:



TEYASOMIÓRES 80.
D'ARVILLE / SUL.

Roux inv



Tyssonnière.

LVIII.

Rask followed us. The highest rock in the valley was yet lighted by the rays of the sun ; a glimmer of light removed it for only an instant, and died away. The negro trembled ; he grasped my hand firmly.

“Listen,” said he.

A dull sound, like the discharge of a piece of artillery was heard, and was repeated by the echoes of the valleys.

“It is the signal!” said the negro in a gloomy voice. He continued : “It is a cannon shot, is it not ?”

I nodded as a sign of the affirmative.

In two bounds he sprang to the top of a lofty rock ; I followed him. He crossed his arms and smiled sadly.

“Do you see that ?” asked he.

I looked in the direction to which he pointed, and I saw the peak to which he had drawn my attention during my last interview with Marie, the one which the sun still shone upon, surmounted by a huge black flag.

Here d’Auverney again paused.

I learned afterwards that Biassou, in a hurry to leave, and thinking me dead, had ordered the flag to be hoisted before the return of the negroes who had been dispatched to execute me.

Bug-Jargal was still in the same position,—his arms folded, and contemplating the fatal flag. Suddenly he started, took a few steps as though to descend from the rock.

“God ! God ! my unfortunate comrades !”

He returned to me. “Did you hear the cannon ?” he demanded. I made no reply.

“Ah, well ! brother, it was the signal. They are leading them now to the place of execution.”

His head fell upon his breast. He came closer to me.

“Go, return to your wife, brother ; Rask will guide you to her.”

He whistled an African air, the dog wagged his tail, and seemed ready to set out toward the valley.

Bug-Jargal grasped my hand, and forced a smile ; but this smile was convulsive.

“Farewell !” he cried, in a loud voice ; and dashed into the thicket which surrounded us.

I was petrified. The little that I understood of the position made me fear the worst.

Rask, on seeing his master disappear, advanced to the edge of the rock, and, raising his head, uttered a plaintive howl. When he

returned, his tail was between his legs ; his eyes moist ; he looked at me with an air of inquietude, then he turned to the spot from which his master had disappeared, and barked several times. I understood him ; I felt the same fears. I took a few steps to his side ; then he dashed off in pursuit of Bug-Jargal ; I should soon have lost sight of him, had he not every now and then halted to give me time to come up to him.

We passed through many a valley ; we climbed wooded hills and thickets. At last . . .

D'Auverney's voice failed him. An expression of despair covered his face ; he could not find words to continue his narrative.

"Thou continue, Thaddeus," said he, "for I have no more strength than an old woman."

The old sergeant was not less distressed than his captain ; but he made an effort to obey him.

"With your permission. Since you wish it, captain, I must tell you, officers, that Bug-Jargal—called Pierrot—was a tall negro, very strong, very gentle, very courageous, and the bravest man in the world—except you, captain ; if you please, I was terribly prejudiced against him, for which I will never pardon myself, though you, captain, have forgiven me. So much so, captain, that when we heard that your execution had been fixed for the evening of the second day, I flew into a furious rage

with the poor fellow, and I felt a fiendish pleasure in informing him that his death would pay for yours, or that, if he escaped, ten of his men would be shot by way of reprisal, as they say, at this news. He said nothing, but an hour afterwards he made his escape through a great hole.'” D'Auverney made a movement of impatience, Thaddeus continued :

“Well ! When we saw the great black flag hoisted on the mountain—and as the negro had not returned, a fact which surprised none of us, with your permission, our officers ordered the signal gun to be fired, and I was ordered to conduct the ten negroes to the place of execution, called the Devil’s Mouth, some distance from the camp—but that does not matter ! When we reached there, you may believe, gentlemen, it was not to set them at liberty, I had them bound, as is the custom, and I paraded my firing party. When who should burst upon us but the tall negro. He was out of breath with the speed that he had made.

“ ‘I arrived in time !’ said he. ‘Good-day, Thaddeus.’

“Yes, gentlemen, he only said that, and he hastened to unbind his comrades. I stood there, stupefied. Then, with your permission, captain—captain, there was a good deal of generous argument between the other negroes and himself which might have lasted longer

but—well, it is no good hiding the fact, it was I that stopped it. He took the place of the blacks. At this moment, his great dog—poor Rask! he came and grasped me at the throat. He would have held me longer, captain, but Pierrot made a sign to him, and the poor brute released me; but Bug-Jargal could not prevent him taking his place at his feet. Then, I thought you were dead, captain. I was in a fine rage. I cried”

The sergeant extended his hand, looked at the captain, but could not say the fatal word.

“Bug-Jargal fell. A bullet broke the dog’s foot. Since that time, gentlemen,” and the sergeant shook his head, sadly, “since then he has been lame. I heard groans in the adjacent wood; I reached it, it was you, captain—a bullet had hit you as you were running forward to save the tall negro. Yes, captain, you were wounded, and Bug-Jargal was dead! You, captain, we carried back to the camp; you were not dangerously wounded, but you recovered owing to the good care of Madam Marie.”

The sergeant stopped. D’Auverney, in a solemn voice, continued:

“Bug-Jargal was dead!”

Thaddeus bowed his head.

“Yes,” said he, “he spared my life, and it was I who killed him! . . .”

NOTE

The reader, in general, is seldom satisfied with the conclusion of a narrative unless it enters into every detail in winding up the story. For this reason the minutest researches have been made into the facts having reference to the concluding details of the last scenes of Leopold d'Auverney, his sergeant, and his dog. The reader is already aware that the captain's feelings of melancholy arose partly from the death of Bug-Jargal, called Pierrot, and the loss of his beloved Marie, who was saved from the horrors of Fort Gali-fet, only to perish in the burning of Cap. As for the captain, his fate may be briefly recapitulated.

The day after a great victory had been won by the French Republican forces against the European armies, the general of division, M——, who was in command of the entire force, was seated in his tent, alone, drawing up, from the reports of his staff, the bulletin which was to be sent to the National Convention concerning the victory of the day before. An aide-de-camp announced to him the





arrival of a representative of the people, who demanded an audience. The general loathed these red cap ambassadors, who were sent by La Montagne to humiliate the military officers, charged with the hateful mission of spying upon glory. However, it would have been dangerous for him to have refused to admit him, especially after a victory. The gory idol of these times loved illustrious victims; and the executioners of the Place de la Revolution were delighted if they could at the same time cause a head and a coronet to fall—were it one of thorns, like that of Louis XVI.; of flowers, like those of the girls of Verdun; or of laurels, like those of Custine or of André Chénier. The general gave orders that the representative should be brought in.

After a few clumsy congratulations regarding the recent victory of the Republican armies, the representative came up close to the general, and muttered in a suppressed voice—

“But this is not all, citizen-general; it is not enough to destroy the foreign enemy,—those nearer home must be also crushed.”

“What do you mean, citizen-representative?” asked the astonished general.

“There is in your division,” mysteriously answered the emissary of the Convention, “a captain named Leopold d’Auverney; he is

serving in the 32d brigade. General, do you know him?"

"Know him, certainly I do," replied the general; "I was reading the report of the adjutant-general which refers to him. The 32d brigade had in him an excellent captain."

"What, citizen-general!" interposed the representative, harshly, "were you thinking of promoting him?"

"I will not conceal from you, citizen-representative, that such was my intention."

Here the representative imperiously interrupted the general.

"Victory has blinded you, General M——! Take care what you say or do. If you cherish serpents who are the enemies of the people, take care that the people do not crush you and the serpents! This Leopold d'Auverney is an aristocrat, a hater of the revolution, a royalist, a Girondin! Public justice demands his head. He must be given up to me in an hour."

The general replied coldly:

"I cannot do so."

"*How! you cannot do so?*" shouted the representative, whose rage was redoubled at this opposition. "Are you ignorant, General M——, of the extent of my power? The Republic commands you, and you must listen to me. I will allow you, in consideration of your success, to read the report which has been

handed me in regard to this d'Auverney, and which I shall send with him to the Public Prosecutor. 'LEOPOLD AUVERNEY (formerly known as D'AUVERNEY), captain in the 32d brigade, convicted, *First*, of having, at a meeting of conspirators, narrated an anti-revolutionary tale, conducing to the ridicule of the true principles of Equality and Liberty, and exalting the worn-out superstitions known under the names of *royalty* and *religion*. Convicted, *Secondly*, of having used expressions deservedly forbidden by all good republicans, to describe certain recent events, notably the enfranchisement of the negroes formerly of Santo Domingo. Convicted, *Thirdly*, of having made use of the expression *monsieur* in his narrative instead of *citizen*; and, last, *Fourthly*, having, by said narrative, endeavored to bring into contempt the Republic, to propagate the infamous doctrines of the Girondins and Brissotistes. He deserves death.' Well! general, what do you say to that? Do you still protect this traitor? Do you hesitate to deliver him to meet the well-merited punishment of his crimes?"

"This enemy of his country has given his life for her," answered the general, with dignity. "As a contrast to your report, listen to an extract from mine: 'LEOPOLD D'AUVERNEY, captain in the 32d brigade, has contributed

largely to the success that our arms have obtained. A formidable earthwork had been erected by the allies; it was the key to their position, and it was necessary to carry it. The death of the stormers who led the attack was almost inevitable. Captain d'Auverney volunteered to lead; he carried the earthwork, but was shot down at the moment of victory. Sergeant Thaddeus of the 32d, and a large dog, were found dead within a few paces of him.' It was my intention to propose that the National Convention should pass a vote that Captain Leopold d'Auverney had merited the thanks of his country. You see, citizen-representative," continued the general, calmly, "that our duties differ slightly—we both send each from his side a report to the Convention. The same name appears in each list. You denounce him as a traitor, I hold him up to posterity as a hero; you devote him to ignominy, I to glory; you would erect a scaffold for him, I a monument; each to his taste. Thank God! he is fortunate in having, by death in action, escaped the infamy you proposed for him; he whose death you desired is dead. He has not waited for you."

The representative, furious at seeing his conspiracy disappear with the conspirator, muttered between his teeth:

“He is dead!—more’s the pity!”

The general caught his words, and in indignant tones exclaimed :

“There is still a resource left for you, citizen-representative ! Go seek the body of Captain d’Auverney amongst the ruins of the redoubt. Who knows? The bullets of the enemy may have spared his head for the national guillotine.”

WRITTEN IN 1826.

NOTES

¹Our readers have, without doubt, forgotten that the Massiac Club, of which Lieutenant Henri spoke, was an association of *négrophiles*. This club, formed in Paris at the commencement of the revolution, had provoked, for the most part, the insurrections which broke out in the colonies. One may be astonished at the lightness and boldness with which the lieutenant jeered at *philanthropes* which still reigned at this epoch, by the grace of the executioner. But it must be remembered that before, during and after the "Terror," freedom of thought and speech had taken refuge in the camps. This noble privilege, from time to time, cut off the head of a general; but absolved from all reproach the dazzling glory of these soldiers that the denouncers of the Convention called "the 'Gentlemen' of the Army of the Rhine."

²A precise explanation will perhaps be necessary for this word. Monsieur Moreau de Saint-Méry, in developing the Franklin system, has classed in the generic species the different tints that present the mixture of the colored population. He supposes that the man is formed of one hundred and twenty parts, whites with whites, blacks with blacks. Upon this principle, he divides the nine species, called the *sacatra*, the *griffe*, the *marabout*, the *mulâtre*, the *quarteron*, the *métis*, the *mamelouc*, the *quarteronné*, and the *sang-mêlé*, according to the proportion of the mixture of the blacks and the whites.

³ *Obi*, a sorcerer.

⁴ Our readers doubtless know that this was the first name given to Santo Domingo, by Christopher Columbus, at the time of the discovery, in December, 1492.

⁵ Victor Hugo has not considered it necessary to give the entire Spanish song, *Porque me huyes, Maria?*

⁶ So the Spanish dwarf called his cap.

⁷ White men who followed trades—not property owners.

⁸ This remedy is frequently used by the natives of Africa; notably by the Moors of Tripoli, who use the ashes of a page of the Koran—an English traveler calls it the infusion of the Koran.

⁹ Many half-castes, otherwise white, had this sign, which, although it disappeared with age, always re-appeared in their children.

¹⁰ Toussaint-Louverture, who was brought up in the teachings of Biassou, and to whom, if he was not superior in ability, he was at least equal in perfidy and cruelty. Toussaint-Louverture has given at a later date an example of this same power over the fanatical negroes. This chief, born, they say, of a royal African race, had received, like Biassou, some rude instruction, from which he added genius. He was on the Republican throne in Santo Domingo at the same time as Napoleon founded his monarchy in France. Toussaint admired the first Consul, but the first Consul, seeing in Toussaint nothing but a parodist, disdainfully repulsed all attempts at correspondence with this free slave who had the audacity to write to him, beginning as follows: *To the first among the whites, the first among the blacks sends greeting, etc., etc.*

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